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THE
SCRIPTURAL CHARACTER
OF
THE ENGLISH CHURCH
CONSIDERED IN A SERIES OF SERMONS;
WITH
NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

BY
THE REV. DERWENT COLERIDGE, M. A.,

HEAD MASTER OF HELLESTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL, IN CORNWALL,
AND CHAPLAIN TO THE HON. SIR JOHN TAYLOR COLERIDGE, KNIGHT, ONE OF HER
MAJESTY'S JUSTICES OF THE COURT OF QUEEN'S BENCH.

LET US PRAY IN THE CHURCH, WITH THE CHURCH, AND FOR THE CHURCH.
D. Mart. Lutheri Colloq. Mens. ch. 20.

LONDON:
JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.

—
M.DCCC.XXXIX

1100.

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Cum his enim volo coram te aliquid colloqui, Deus meus, qui hæc omnia, quæ intus in mente mea non tacet veritas tua, vera esse concedunt. Nam qui hæc negant, latrent quantum volunt et obstrepant sibi; persuadere conabor ut quiescant, et viam præbeant ad se verbo tuo: quod si noluerint et repulerint me; obsecro, Deus meus, NE tu SILEAS A ME. Tu loquere in corde meo veraciter; solus enim sic loqueris; et dimittam eos foris sufflantes in pulverem, et excitantes terram in oculos suos; et INTREM IN CUBILE MEUM, et cantem tibi amatoria, gemens inenarrabiles gemitus in peregrinatione mea, et recordans Jerusalem, extento in eam sursum corde, Jerusalem patriam meam, JERUSALEM MATREM meam, teque super eam regnatorem, illustratorem, patrem, tutorem, maritum, castas et fortes delicias, et solidum gaudium, et omnia bona ineffabilia simul omnia; quia unum summum et verum bonum: et non avertar, donec in ejus pacem matris charissimæ, ubi sunt PRIMITIÆ SPIRITUS mei, unde mihi ista certa sunt, colligas totum quod sum, a dispersione et deformitate hac, et conformes atque confirmes in æternum, Deus meus, misericordia mea.—AUG. Confess. lib. xii. cap. 23.

PARAPHRASE.

As in thy presence, O my God, would I confer with those who hold the spiritual suggestions of Thy word to be true indeed:—Thy word, revealed in Christ, recorded in Holy Writ, but speaking in the reasonable soul. For others, I will seek to hush their loud and angry contradiction with gentle persuasion, bidding them be still, that they may hear Thy voice. But, if they repel my advances, and will have none of my counsel, turn not Thou from me, nor be silent. Speak to me in my heart with truth-revealing prompture, Thou who alone so speakest; and let me leave unquiet and worldly men to their self-inflicted blindness: that in the stillness of my chamber I may plead to Thee, with hymns of spiritual love, and inward moans unutterable, the yearnings of my pilgrimage; remembering Jerusalem, with straining desire, and uplifted heart; Jerusalem my country, Jerusalem my Mother, and Thee her King, and light-diffusing Glory, her Father, Guardian, Husband; the Source of all pure delights, the Ground of all solid satisfaction; the Substance and Union of all ineffable blessings. For Thou art the One supreme, and real good; and I will not cease from my importunity till from the distraction and disfigurement of this present state, calling home my scattered affections, and restoring the unsightly ruin of my nature, Thou gather up all that I am, into the peaceful bosom of that holy, well-beloved Mother, where *the first fruits* of my spirit,—even the witness of my assurance,—are already laid; moulding me to Thy image, and strengthening me with Thy communion, for evermore—my God, my merciful God!

P R E F A C E.

THE altered position in which the Church of England has recently¹ been placed as a national Establishment, and the still more serious changes with which she is daily menaced, have stimulated the minds of her more intelligent supporters, and produced many admirable writings in her defence. It has been felt that, unless both juster and clearer views on ecclesiastical subjects become prevalent, an evil day is drawing near, which the efforts of private zeal may retard, but cannot prevent. A vigilant discharge, on the part of the clergy, of pastoral and other official duties, with a strict attention to personal deportment, must indeed win respect, in a general way, for the faith which they profess. In some instances (such is the temper of the times), it may even procure too marked a homage for themselves ; they may enjoy, as individuals, that deference which is denied to their order : but if the perma-

¹ The publication of this volume having been delayed by unforeseen circumstances, the temporary allusions in the first eight Sermons, must be referred to the beginning of last, or the end of the preceding, year (1837-8). Little change, however, has taken place in the posture of ecclesiastical affairs since that time, except that the controversy, to which certain members of the University of Oxford have lately given birth, has become more general, and assumed a more decided tone.

nent welfare of religion be in any sort identified with the stability of the Church, their best exertions will fall short of this object, so long as they are recognised as insulated teachers, and not as representatives of a system. It may even happen that high ministerial endowments, exercised in a separative spirit, may promote the disaffection which they might be expected to conciliate. Oh! it is sad, when those gracious and commanding qualities, on which, as accessories, the ablest Christian advocacy is dependent for success, are employed to strengthen prejudice, to sanction error, and to embarrass the truth.

It is remarkable that those writers who have maintained the cause of the Church on the highest religious grounds, have obtained by far the most attention. This is as it should be: we have leaned too long on the broken reed of political influence. It was time to look to the foundations of our belief, as Churchmen, and rejecting those props which indicate weakness, rather than confer strength, to replace the fabric on its proper basis. We shall err, however, in regarding the notice excited by a particular party as a proof of a corresponding movement in the public mind. The returning eddy may be seen and heard, when the main current flows on in silence. In every case, it is the obstacle that ripples the stream. Still it is a hopeful symptom. It evinces that the faith of our forefathers is not extinct. It may have slept, but it has been awakened; and now that it is distinctly re-asserted, we may hope that it will make head against the

strongest tide of popular opinion. Meanwhile, an interest in the higher branches of theological study has been revived, and is rapidly gaining ground. If we miss the transcendent ability displayed by the greatest of our old divines, or the stupendous erudition by which they were still more generally distinguished,—in Christian meekness, in courtesy and candour, or, at the very least, in decorum,—our contemporaries may claim the advantage. Polemical divinity is thus redeemed from its most serious reproach; and the studies of the cloister, rendered practical by the necessities of the times, begin to recover, and to justify, their ancient repute.

It is in periods like the present that opinions are sifted. The treasures of thought and learning, which the Church of this nation has always had at its command, are unlocked. “Things new and old” are “brought out,” and in the comparison thus provoked, a powerful instrument is furnished for the investigation of truth. In such a time any attempt, however crude and unsatisfactory, to consider facts with a reference to principles, may have a beneficial tendency. If it promote discussion, if it widen the field of examination, or bring into it additional inquirers, it will do good. In a humbler province, as giving increased publicity to the thoughts of other men, it may be of service. It may contribute to the spread of knowledge, though it confer nothing to its advancement; and though speedily set aside, it may run through a little circle of usefulness before it fall into entire oblivion. At all

events, it can do little harm ; for it finds the public mind prepared to take up the subject, and its errors are quickly detected, and effectually exposed.

It is by this reflection that I have justified to myself the publication of the following Essay; for such I would wish it to be considered. It has no pretensions either to regularity of design, or to completeness of execution. A series of Sermons cannot follow the same method as a formal treatise, divided into chapters. Each Sermon is, or ought to be, a separate composition, having an independent unity in itself. Though intended for the closet, it must admit of being delivered from the pulpit to a suitable audience ; and must exhibit an entire portion of the truth, with an implied and prospective reference to the whole. It must consequently repeat much that has preceded, and anticipate much that is to come. This is scarcely compatible with the gradual developement of a system. But in truth a graver objection to this mode of proceeding inheres in the subject itself. Religion, as it subsists in the world, is not an abstract scheme, and cannot be so considered without manifest risk of error. It is a collection of facts, each of which implies the existence of every other, and a common ground of truth, apart from which the several facts have no existence or reality. Historically considered, these facts correspond to a succession of events ; thus the nearest approach to a systematic arrangement is that supplied by the order of time, in which, however, we have to combine and concentrate all that we know of

the divine scheme in order to understand its earliest rudiments. If we commence with half truths and partial statements, we introduce more falsehood in the process of reasoning than we can ever eliminate in the result. For a certain entireness must be given them in order to make them conceivable; and whatever is thus added, is untrue. So long as we deal with facts, or events, this inconvenience is avoided. The true theory of the Church is to be sought in its history.

All artificial arrangements proceed upon hypotheses, which may, or may not, be true, and in religion can never be the whole truth; for this being necessarily incomprehensible, cannot be *supposed*, or be made, a basis of logical induction. Even in natural history, arbitrary systems, however seemingly methodical, and really convenient, are daily losing ground in the estimation of philosophic observers. Though ostensibly abstracted from facts, they are found after all to have no correlative in nature. They depend upon notions existing in the mind alone, and are perpetually set aside by new discoveries. The mutual connexion of natural phenomena cannot be discovered, except by a reference to that universal truth in which they all cohere, and which is implicitly contained in each. Thus classification is eventually superseded. Every several appearance examined in and for itself, is perceived to reflect, with a clearness proportioned to our own knowledge, that universal idea which is the truth of nature, lying at its centre, and spreading to its circumference, of which the visible universe is the

outward image, and every part an appropriate symbol. Such, at least, is the ultimatum to which the human mind is tending by a gradual advance; and in this process the first step is a dim divination of the last. Meanwhile our true vocation is the patient and submissive examination of the facts, taking them for what they are, and not for that which our theories would make them. It is so with religion. Our first business is with the outward facts. That the impression of the divine mind is set on each, we cannot doubt; that they all co-exist in one heavenly plan, bearing the same impress, is also matter of faith: but it may not be given us to trace their connexion distinctly. It is sufficient that we accept every separate revelation of our Father's will implicitly and simply, taking it for what it is, a truth to be received, a gift to be enjoyed, and a command to be obeyed. It is this which makes Religion, including its highest mysteries, the possession of the way-faring man. It is not for us to say such is the nature of God, and such the condition of man, and then to draw conclusions, as in a system of geometry. Neither may we analyze the Fatherly government of the world, or attempt to re-construct the Church out of its elements. We cannot do so with a blade of grass. Happy, if brooding with earnest faith on all that is given us to believe, we may catch a glimpse of that master-light (for such there is) which shows every part in its relation to the whole, and gives to knowledge the character of revelation. Is this mysticism? To see in the word and works

of God, one divine and universal truth, of which the Bible is the record, Christianity the substance, and the Church the manifestation :—is it not the common privilege of the saints? “We *all* with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed by that image, from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord.”

Impressed with these convictions, I have sought rather to trace the workings of certain general ideas, in every part of the divine economy, than to develop a regular system. This method, while it gives a desultory character to the work, has occasioned many apparent repetitions, only to be excused from the unspeakable importance of the subject. The actual state of the Church presents a variety of problems, all of which are to be solved by the application of a few fundamental principles, to which we must perpetually recur. It is only in this way that we can render these intelligible, or prove them to be sufficient. If the views exhibited in these Sermons be correct, the sameness which this produces, is exactly what might be expected from the uniformity and simplicity of truth.

In a volume of such slight pretensions, to speak of my obligation to recent or contemporary writers, except in the most general terms, would be to claim an originality for my work, on the whole, to which it has no title. I am not, indeed, conscious of having adopted the views of any particular party; nor have I wittingly transferred to my pages the reasonings of

any particular writer. Having undertaken to assert and illustrate the scriptural character of the national Church, I have made use of all the information within my reach, and only regret that it has not been more extensive ; but the only authorities to which I have deferred is that of Holy Writ, on the one part, and of the Church itself on the other : of the Church, as represented by her own formularies, and apparent structure. On these my whole attention has been ultimately fixed. I have consequently followed out my principles, whither they have led me, independently of any other guidance : and hence the citations and references, with which I have occasionally fortified my statements, are to be regarded, either as vouchers for matters of fact, or as *coincidences*, adduced in confirmation of my argument ; not so much as investing it with the sanction of a venerable or popular name, still less as indicating the sources from which it has been derived, (for in almost every instance they have been supplied by subsequent investigation,) but rather as *testing*, by an independent agreement, the accuracy of my results. This, however, is no proof of real originality. I may, after all, have been conducted along a beaten path, by the powerful, but insensible influence of other minds, by which my own has been more or less immediately trained ; or, perhaps, by the common impulsion of the age in which I live. All men are subject to a certain impression from both these causes ; but it is reserved for a few, a very few, great masters of thought, (men not always the most con-

spicuous in their generation,) to mould this impression into new forms, or even to modify it in any considerable degree.

To touch for a moment upon the influences acting upon the theological press at this time. It is evident that there is something peculiar in the present aspect of religion in this country. Men are divided not so much as Calvinists and Arminians, nor as Churchmen and Non-conformists, (whether Independents in respect of discipline, or Dissenters in respect of doctrine,) nor again as high and low Churchmen, (as touching the nature of catholic Christianity¹;) nor even as Pro-

¹ These parties may be broadly classified under four heads, according to the attitude which they severally assume to the Christian Church. The existence of an invisible or spiritual Church is equally acknowledged by all as the substance of their belief, apart from which the appointments of religion are utterly without value. The existence of an external or visible Church is a tenet equally universal. Every Christian admits the necessity both of an outward and an inward religion: of something which is seen, and something which is felt; the demonstration of the Spirit, and the power. But the connexion between the two, and again the relation borne by each to the state, is variously regarded; the following being the extreme opinions of each party.

By some the visible Church is pronounced a variable accident,—the creature of circumstance and expediency. Viewed on its favourable side this opinion may be considered as a protest against idolatry and formalism.

By others the Church is pronounced *essentially* visible, having a definitive form, not indeed strictly invariable, but permanently identical, and involved in the original structure. The holders of this opinion are specially opposed to licentious speculation, to indifference, and infidelity.

By each of these, the union of Church and State may be either favoured or opposed. Thus the first are subdivided into low Churchmen and Independents:—the latter into high Churchmen, (of whom

testants and Romanists, as by an antagonism, common to all of these opposites, and continually re-appearing in the Church under new forms ; but never, perhaps, so clearly developed as now ; I mean by the spirit of Protestantism and by the spirit of Catholicism. These may be defined as tendencies, the first to individualize, the second to generalize, religious truths ; the first to realize Christianity as a subjective act, the second to substantiate it as an objective verity. The first deals with *men*, the second with *man*. With the one divine grace is a particular, with the other a universal boon : one leans to the invisible, the other to the visible Church : one asserts, and the other limits, the exercise of private judgment. The Gospel comes to the first through the medium of Scripture ; by the second it is found in the living body of the Church ; the one sets forth the word, the other the sacraments : the one urges the necessity of a spiritual, the other of a fixed and outward service. Now it is plain, that these two principles, so far from being contradictory, are ideally correlative, and ought to unite in every Christian person ; but it is no less evident, that when this inter-dependence is destroyed, and they are put forward separately, each becomes exaggerated, disguised, and distorted. Far from cohering in the same subject, they are at deadly war with each other, so

the great majority of the English clergy has long been composed,) and Churchmen of principles akin to those of the Non-jurors, distinguished at present as Anglo-Catholics, professedly scandalized at the secular relations of the Church in this kingdom.

that whatever be the outward occasion of feud in the Christian body, the real opposition is between those who would have every man stand out as an individual, and those who would merge all individuality in a common union. This struggle has always been carried on more or less energetically in the Church; and though it necessarily implies both a defect and an excess of some kind or other; yet it is often made, under Providence, a mean by which a healthy balance is restored. In the first three centuries of the Christian era, the two forces, though not reconciled, held each other in check; then the latter prevailed for many ages, not without occasional indications that the antagonist principle, though in captivity, was not extinct; till, at the Reformation, it asserted its full power. A second outbreak, of greater virulence, in this country, overthrew both throne and altar; but again the tide of Catholic feeling returned with renewed impetuosity, since which time, till within the last few years, it has gradually but slowly receded. It is now once more swelling to a head; but whether it will succeed in occupying its ancient bed, or be driven still further back by the opposing land-flood; or,—which is devoutly to be wished,—the two currents be at length united, so as to carry Christianity forward in one broad stream, is more than it would be safe to predict¹.

¹ The first of these opposing forces, considered as in excess, has been recently entitled *ultra-Protestantism*; the latter has long been known under the name of *Roman* or *Papal* Catholicism; but neither

Now, it should be remembered, that every author, on both sides of this momentous question, professes, and doubtless intends, to effect this reconciliation.

of these terms is quite free from objection. They are both invidious, tending to cast a slight upon the names, and eventually upon the principles of Protestantism and Catholicism themselves. How much the latter has been affected in this way has often been noticed. A Catholic, in popular estimation, is still a Roman Catholic and a Papist. Let us beware how we bring a similar discredit upon the former. The protest of the Reformed Churches, whether regarded as a political or a religious act, was never more necessary than at the present moment. It is the necessary counter-check to Papacy, and can never be withdrawn till the latter be destroyed. Besides, the principle of Protestantism (as explained above) is essentially good, and cannot, strictly speaking, be carried to excess. Religion can never be too subjective, nor man too free. It is only when isolated that it becomes, not excessive merely, but depraved, passing out of itself into a mischievous counterfeit, from which it cannot be too carefully distinguished. In like manner Christianity cannot be too catholic; but to isolate this principle, in the hope of enforcing it, is in effect to deny it altogether. This is continually occurring apart from the influence of the *Roman* pontiff, as in the Greek Church, not to come nearer home; though a papacy, of some sort or other, is that to which it plainly leads. Again, the phrase Roman Catholic cannot be objected to by those who call themselves Anglo-Catholics; and, indeed, as indicating the connexion of an individual with these particular Churches, either term may be used without offence, though not with logical propriety: for the Catholicism of Rome and England being one and the same thing, cannot be particularly distinguished. As well might we speak of a military or naval catholic, meaning a good Christian in the army and navy. We may speak of the Roman atmosphere, for this is modified by the place. It is bright and warm, but not pure. It embalms the precious monuments of antiquity, but it is hostile to human life. But it would be absurd to speak of Roman light; for the blessed light of heaven, though it may be less intercepted in one place than in another, is the same in all the world. It is not well to couple the name of Protestant and Catholic with the errors of those by whom these titles are assumed, unless we could say Pseudo-Protestantism and Pseudo-Catholicism, the falsification of these necessary principles.

Moderate men are, indeed, contented, for the most part, to adopt one or the other view in the main, while they refuse to follow out their principles to any deduction, wearing a paradoxical, impracticable, or mischievous appearance. Others attempt to combine the advantages, while they avoid the excesses of each, and seek for some hypothesis, (seldom with much success,) which may serve as an amalgam. But the most effective writers, whatever account they may give of themselves, are in general thoroughly compromised on one side or the other. They are either engaged in a strong opposition to the Protestant spirit, as the parent of doubt, profaneness, and insubordination, or they are opposed no less vehemently to the Catholic spirit, as bringing back with it, under fair pretences, all the error, superstition, and spiritual bondage, from which we have so happily escaped. Thus, minor differences being neglected, we may recognise two different ways of thinking and feeling, into one or other of which every writer on religious subjects may be expected to fall.

I have not attempted to take a middle path between the two. Contemplating each as essentially the same idea, viewed in a different aspect, and believing that to disparage either is, in reality, to negative both, I have been led to insist with equal stress on the catholicity of the Church, as identified with the spirit of its lively members, and the spirituality of the Church, as secured by its catholic forms. But I am far indeed from flattering myself that I

have worked out this great problem satisfactorily, or that no ambiguous expressions occur in the course of my work, capable, when taken singly, of an injurious construction. I would merely request from the candour, or at least from the indulgence of my readers, that particular parts should be judged with reference to the whole, and the earlier portions be reconsidered according to the principles more fully developed in those which follow.

Of the many treatises which have lately issued from the press, in which the general subject of these Sermons is directly or indirectly handled, a small number only has fallen into my hands. Of those which I have read, many appear to me of uncommon excellence. To the eminent writers by whom the catholic side of the question has recently been supported, with an enthusiasm and an ability worthy of the cause, I cheerfully acknowledge myself under deep obligations. The debt which we owe to those who have contributed to enlarge our knowledge of divine truth, is scarcely less than sacred; and I am peculiarly bound to pay this tribute of gratitude to these distinguished controversialists, because, in following the same general line of opinion I have found myself opposed to them in several important particulars, more especially as to the implicit connexion between reason and faith, the character of a symbolic worship, and the nature of religious mystery. Whether these variations indicate an essential difference of opinion, or arise merely from a different use of terms, must be left for others to determine.

For the impulse which these divines have given to the public mind, they must, on all hands, be regarded as entitled to public thanks : while their personal qualifications cannot but secure to them the highest personal consideration. Learned without pedantry, earnest without rancour, grave, even to severity, yet without moroseness, singular, (for they are the champions of neglected truth,) yet perfectly unaffected ; uncompromising, yet not ungentle ; blending their strict and erudite orthodoxy with the most edifying and persuasive piety, they have furnished a model of controversial writing, which cannot be too generally imitated. I speak, be it remembered, of the manner, not the matter, of their teaching. If these writers maintain any views really peculiar, if they differ essentially in doctrine from the great ecclesiastical writers of their own Church, in whose steps they profess to tread, if they exhibit any defection from the principles of the Reformation, as actually worked out in this country, (for we are surely not bound by the casual expressions of individual controversialists,) such views are not willingly adopted in these Sermons. If, to speak plainly, they have failed to distinguish between a true symbol, and the idol which, in the absence of an intelligent faith, it inevitably becomes, or confounded the ineffable and incomprehensible substance, with its earthly representative ; if they have done this, not in particular cases, but in their conception of the visible Church at large ; if, consequently, in picturing the beauty of holiness, they have exhibited the form without the

life; if they have given to Church authority the attributes of dogmatism, and instead of moral docility required an intellectual subjection; if, in questioning the right of private interpretation, (the right, as it is commonly understood, of judging without knowledge, and deciding without evidence,—as it is commonly practised, of slighting everything that is venerable, disputing everything that is approved, and profaning everything that is holy,) they have invaded the sacred prerogative of reason; if, in drawing a parallel between the errors of Romanism on the one hand, and of the Protestant body on the other, they have shown as much over-tenderness to the corruptions of the former, as over-harshness to the mistakes and excesses of the latter, (let it be understood that these positions are stated hypothetically, in a spirit of caution and self-distrust,) waiting for the determination of riper judgment, and above all of the

*‘Αμέραι δ’ ἐπίλοιποι
Μάρτύρες σοφώτατοι,—*

with these views I have nothing in common; with the tone of feeling out of which they spring, a very limited sympathy. But taking their opinions for that which in the main they are, the traditional doctrines of the English Church, as represented in her ordinances, and accredited by the great majority of her divines, though accidentally unpopular in the present age,—Church doctrines, interpreted in doubtful, and adjusted in undecided cases, by the great catholic

authorities,—with these opinions I freely avow my general concurrence, and would gladly devote my best energies to uphold, to explain, and to recommend them.

To the writers on the other side of the question,—alas! that learned, able, and pious men, should have to struggle with each other, instead of banding their forces against their common enemy, the spirit of this wretched, blind, and unbelieving world,—I am, of course, opposed in *opinion*, but in opinion merely; I cheerfully and gratefully avow the benefit which I have derived, intellectually and morally, from the perusal of their writings. A straight-forward simplicity of mind, a paramount love of truth, and a genial faith, spreading itself over the whole surface of life,—these on the one hand,—and, again, a most vigorous understanding, scattering light in its rapid and excursive course, and presenting perhaps a partial, but still a luminous and instructive view of every subject which passes, however transiently, under its review,—such are the moral and intellectual qualities, which distinguish the most eminent of those Christian teachers, whose anti-ecclesiastical bias¹ is so deeply regretted by the lovers of the English Church.

¹ That new form exhibited a marked and recognised division between the so-called secular and spiritual powers, and thereby has maintained in Christian Europe the unhappy distinction which necessarily prevailed in the heathen empire between the Church and the State; a distinction now so deeply seated in our laws, our language, and our very notions, that nothing less than a miraculous interposition of God's providence seems capable, within any definite time, of eradicating it.—ARNOLD'S *Hist. Rome*, Vol. i. p. 8, 9.

But I lie under deeper and nearer obligations, too deep to be passed over in silence, too near, it may perhaps be thought, to be acknowledged except in this distant and respectful allusion. If there be any value in the imperfect Essay which these remarks are intended to introduce, if, under more favourable circumstances, I should be enabled to redeem its numerous deficiencies, in some maturer production; I shall account it my highest praise, if it shall be said by any competent reader that I have been indebted to the same source for my intellectual and natural life.

And, now, if I trusted to my own impulse, I should conclude. It is not, indeed, altogether by a feeling of delicacy that I am held back from speaking more particularly of my revered father's religious opinions. Samuel Taylor Coleridge as an individual—

The transitory being who beheld
This vision—

belongs to the past. The endearing ties which connected him with the shifting scene, which he has left, are become a shadowy recollection; and if the forgotten name which he bore, and which will not cease to be associated with certain forms of beauty and of truth, still hover as an inspiring presence over those to whom it has descended in the way of earthly kindred, in a still higher sense, the spirit and power of that name, is the common property of all to whom it may be helpful—all who seeking enlightenment, in conformity with the will and revelation of God in Christ, may, at any time, be benefited by its guidance. This

restraint, therefore, is either taken off, or overcome by a higher motive. It is a sense of my inability to pursue this topic in a manner satisfactory to my own judgment, which seems to impose upon me the necessity of a cautious reserve. Had I felt myself equal to the task of giving to the world a popular view of my honoured father's theology, involved as it is in a philosophical system, not more profound than practical,—(if to awaken new faculties of thought, and to direct them to the highest ends, be a substantial benefit, and lead to the most important consequences, a system of philosophy no less practical than profound ;)—a philosophy, let me add, already influencing the intellect of this country, though in silence, to a considerable extent, and destined, as I believe, to give a new impulse to metaphysical, if not to physical, inquiry, for ages to come ; destined, above all, “to vindicate the ways of God to man,” with a force of evidence of inappreciable value to meditative and penetrating minds ; were I possessed of knowledge, opportunity, or talents qualifying me for the office of his interpreter, I should assuredly not have shrunk from the labour or the responsibility of the undertaking¹. As it is, the following pages must be judged on their own merits : and though I gladly attribute whatever worth they may

¹ It is indeed a happiness to all who revere the name of Coleridge, that the business of editing his writings has been accepted by a member of his family every way so well able to do justice both to the man and to his genius. Henry Nelson Coleridge, will not, I trust, refuse me the pleasure of tendering him, in my own name, and in that of all concerned, this public expression of our affectionate thanks.

possess to the effect of his teaching; though I willingly submit my conclusions to be tested by the principles contained in his works, yet I would not have this imperfect production to be taken as an exponent of his views. When, indeed, I contemplate the wisdom apparent even in the casual out-pourings, and chance-discovered fragments of his mind, when I remember the stores of learning by which it was fed, and the life-long reflection by which it was matured, it is not, I confess, without reluctance that I seem to place my own researches by the side of his. But I am admonished that this comparison cannot but be made by every reader of my father's works, who may be induced to cast an eye over that of his younger son. It becomes my duty, therefore, to prevent, as far as may be, any injurious misapprehension, whether it be likely to affect his reputation, or my own.

I have already intimated my conviction, that Coleridge belongs to that small number of writers by whom opinion is permanently influenced. This effect is attributable not merely, or so much to the number or importance of the truths to which he has given currency, as to the method of investigation which he developed. It is the power of vision, not the mere spectacle, which he laboured to communicate. Believing that "a gift of genuine insight" is, in some sort, the common attribute of humanity, he spent his life in removing the impediments by which it is so commonly intercepted. To effect this, independently of Christianity, (Christianity as outwardly revealed in the

person of Jesus the Messiah, recorded in Holy Writ, maintained in the Church catholic, and asserted subjectively in the souls of men, through the influence of the Holy Ghost,) appeared to him a contradiction. Hence, the principles of his philosophy are purely religious; and its application as carried out by himself, though spreading over a wide field of politics and general criticism, appears most frequently in connexion with scriptural or ecclesiastical subjects. Add to this, his passionate admiration of the English Church, both as a national institution, and as exhibiting a very pure form of catholic religion, and we may expect the whole subject of this work anticipated, so to speak, in his writings. Accordingly, in every one of his works, but particularly in the *Aids to Reflection*, and in the *Church and State*, a solution will be found for all the questions which I have specially undertaken to discuss. I am most unhappily mistaken, and shall be grievously disappointed, if my general results, though worked out independently, are irreconcilable with his. Nevertheless, it will be borne in mind, that the same truth, when viewed from different sides, may present a somewhat different appearance. To reconcile the actual constitution of the Church, as seen from without, with its inward and spiritual form, as cognizable in Scripture, (the *forma formata* with the *forma formans*,) is my immediate object. This may be pursued in opposite directions. I have begun with the phenomenon. Hence, the *general* method of this work is analytical, whereas the scope of the *Aids to Reflection* is to supply

the materials of an enlightened synthesis. Beginning, as I have said, with that which is seen,—the Church with all its adjuncts, as it now exists in our land,—I have proceeded to unfold its complex nature, and exhibit its constitutive elements. Separating that which is necessary from that which is accidental, I have sought to show how the former makes known the living principle, by which the structure is regulated, while the latter, in certain cases, acquires a secondary necessity, and becomes inseparable from the body to which it is attached, even as the larvæ of certain insects provide themselves with a temporary integument, not strictly of their own substance, not a shell secreted from within, nor a chrysalis spun from a material previously assimilated, but a mere husk, made up of the straws or pebbles among which they happen to lie, which yet takes a definite form exquisitely adapted to their own, and suited to their then state of existence. To vary the metaphor, I have first viewed the external walls of the edifice, ivy-clad, as they are, and tinted with the hues of age, not wholly separate from the secular structures adjoining, nor unaccompanied with some sad memorials of violence and wrong. Entering the building, I first survey the external decencies of the worship. The “vested” ministers next engage my attention; by whom I am conducted to “the laver of regeneration” and to the communion table. Kneeling before that altar, the mediating vision is at length withdrawn, or becomes transparent; and in that attitude, contemplating with silent prayer the *unseen* glory

of the tabernacle,—the last tear of penitential sorrow not yet fallen, but every tear now ray-lit from the orient of faith,—I close the sacred scene. Thus at every step I draw nearer to that holy Presence, by Whom the whole is sanctified, and the parts explained. Such has been the *general* method, or at least arrangement, imposed upon me by the nature of my subject; though at every stage of my progress I have reversed the process, passing from the rudimental to the complete,—from the idea to its revealing structure and visible exponent.

In this way I have been led to dwell longer and more particularly upon the apparent and the actual, than the Christian philosopher who dwelt habitually “in the inner shrine,” and whose specific task it was to trim the sacred fire. It may well happen that this difference has given a different *tone* to the whole investigation; and if this be accompanied with here and there a slight diversity, or at least, unlikeness, in the sentiments expressed; if I have insisted more on the necessity, and less on the danger of a ceremonial worship; if I have attached more consequence to the permanent symbols of catholicity by which the historical Church is distinguished; if I have set forward more distinctly the sacramental nature of all outward religion; such a discrepancy, whether arising from different mental pursuits, or from the legitimate influence of a sacred profession, may surely consist with a substantial agreement.

In one instance, in the interpretation which I have

given of our Saviour's discourse to Nicodemus, in the third chapter of St. John, I fear I have been betrayed into the *semblance* of direct opposition, I need not add unintentionally¹.

A feeling of respect, amounting to veneration, would effectually restrain me from entering the field of disputation with the Author of *Aids to Reflection*. My own opinion, deliberately formed, and now made public, must indeed stand or fall with the system out of which it has sprung. The necessary co-presence of the sacrament, with its corresponding mystery in every scheme of outward worship, is one of my fundamental principles; as little would I separate the light from its appointed luminary, or the spirit of fragrance from the flower that breathes it. But is there any actual *contradiction* between the views of S. T. Coleridge and

¹ "But you, my filial friend, have studied Christ under a better teacher,—the Spirit of adoption, even the spirit that was in Paul, and which still speaks to us out of his writings. You remember and admire the saying of an old divine, that a ceremony duly instituted was a chain of gold around the neck of faith; but if, in the wish to make it co-essential and consubstantial, you draw it closer and closer, it may strangle the faith it was meant to deck and designate. You are not so unretentive a scholar as to have forgotten the *pateris et auro* of your Virgil; or, if you were, you are not so inconsistent a reasoner, as to translate the Hebraism, spirit and fire, in one place by spiritual fire, and yet refuse to translate water and spirit by spiritual water in another place; or if, as I myself think, the different position marks a different sense, yet that the former must be *ejusdem generis* with the latter,—the water of repentance, reformation in *conduct*,—and the Spirit, that which purifies the inmost *principle* of action, as fire purges the metal substantially, and not cleansing the surface only."—See *Aids to Reflection*, p. 281, 4th edit. Compare Sermon xiv. 260—263, the Note 276—286. Sermon xvi. p. 322.

those put forth in these Sermons? I think, none. The statement in the *Aids to Reflection* amounts, I believe, to this. Our Saviour, in the text referred to, did not insist on the necessity of water-baptism, but of spiritual regeneration. The view taken in these Sermons is to this effect: our blessed Lord's immediate object was not to insist upon baptism as the seal of spiritual regeneration, but to proclaim regeneration to be the spirit of baptism. The external rite being *supposed*, the spiritual change is *required*. This position goes further than the former, but it is surely not inconsistent with it. The Essay in question is stated not to have exhibited the Author's own views in a manner perfectly satisfactory to himself: but it seems to me, I confess, wholly incredible, that the same man who saw the Eucharist in the sixth chapter of the fourth Gospel, should not have seen Baptism in the third, and in precisely the same way. If, therefore, the former correspond, in any sense, to an outward ceremony, if it be properly set forth in the liturgical forms of the English Prayer Book,—and to this the testimony of S. T. Coleridge, conceived in terms of the most impassioned eloquence, is direct and express,—it may fairly be inferred, that the sister service was regarded by him, in the main, with the same sort of approval, and received the same sort of interpretation.

In conclusion, I would beg to refer to the peculiar difficulties under which this work has been produced, at a distance from books, and the scarcely less valuable

assistance of friends, amid the distractions of a laborious and all but engrossing profession, not with a wish to soften criticism, but in the hope that I shall at least disarm censure. Withdrawn for a time from my more sacred calling, I would still wish to be engaged in the same ministry, trusting that the will and not the deed will be accepted, as the measure of my service.

HELLESTON,
May 1, 1839.

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CORRIGENDA.

- Page 53, line 30, *for ripe, read rife.*
82, — 26, *for pursuit, read pursuits.*
110, — 26 (note,) *after counsel, insert of the.*
233, — 35 (note,) *for nomenon, read noumenon.*
255, — 5, *the period ends at circumcision.*
272, — 1, *for from, read and.*
277, — 35 (note,) *for ἐκεῖνο, read ἐκεῖνοι.*
280, — 34 (note,) *for ground, read grounds.*
299, — 12, *for purer, read pure.*
355, — 34 (note,) *for notice, read notion.*
356, — 34 (note,) *for absolution, read absolutism.*
380, — 5, *for it must be, read that it is.*
394, — 26, *for when, read if.*
395, — 1, *for presents, read present.*
429, — 12, *for exhibit it the, read exhibit the.*

SCRIPTURAL CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

SERMON I.

ON THE USE AND ABUSE OF JEWISH PRECEDENTS.

PSALM cxxii. 1.

*I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of
the Lord.*

THE beautiful and impressive hymn of which these are the opening words, though referable, in the first instance, to the feelings of a single individual upon a peculiar occasion, has long been adopted and applied to its own purposes by the Christian Church. We shall greatly err in regarding the principle of accommodation here adopted as merely conventional and arbitrary. No new, no different, no additional meaning is hereby imputed. The prophecy is but traced to its fulfilment; the hidden germ expanded by a natural and foreseen development. The notes of that golden harp were not struck to die upon

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THE beautiful and impressive hymn of which these are the opening words, though referable, in the first instance, to the feelings of a single individual upon a peculiar occasion, has long been adopted and applied to its own purposes by the Christian Church. We shall greatly err in regarding the principle of accommodation here adopted as merely conventional and arbitrary. No new, no different, no additional meaning is hereby imputed. The prophecy is but traced to its fulfilment; the hidden germ expanded by a natural and foreseen development. The notes of that golden harp were not struck to die upon the breezes of Judea, nor its last sighs breathed "beside the waters of Babylon," to expire among "the willows," and be heard no more. "Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words to the ends of the world¹." Not for their historic interest alone, not for their touching sweetness merely, have they been thus preserved. There is in these inspired strains an imperishable life, inherent in their peculiar nature. The figures in which

¹ Psalm xix. 4.

they are couched are alike pregnant with meaning, whether referred to the type or the anti-type. Equally applicable to the present as to the past, to the future as to the present, they are, in truth, ever new. "The dew of their birth is of the womb of the morning¹." Hence it is that they have become the established language of devotion, the universal melody of prayer.

Invited by his brethren to go up with them to the tabernacle or temple at Jerusalem, the holy Psalmist gives vent to an overflowing of pious joy. He congratulates himself on the happy circumstances which guided his steps within the gates of Zion, and breaks forth into an outpouring of fervent praise upon that sacred city, which Jehovah had chosen for himself as the earthly "habitation of his holiness²."

Here, indeed, the best affections of the Israelite were properly centered. Jerusalem was his place of worship and city of promise. Hither he was directed to bring his stated sacrifice, and here to discharge his solemn vows. Here he was taught to seek, and encouraged to expect, atonement for his sins, and reconciliation with the offended majesty of heaven. A seat of mercy, and "thrones of judgment," were established here; and here he was permitted to inquire of the Lord, and to "commune" with the God of his fathers³.

Again, the "house of the Lord," thus consecrated for religious service, and set apart for covenanted blessings, was yet further endeared to the chosen race by the most affecting associations as well with the past as with the future.

Its connexion with the past was obvious and impressive. The gorgeous temple, on which the treasures of

¹ Psalm cx. 3.

² Isai. lxiii. 15.

³ Exod. xxv. 22.

royal piety had been so unsparingly lavished, was but a more splendid and stable repository for the ark of God, made by divine appointment shortly after their deliverance from the land of Egypt; that sacred coffer which they had borne along with them with so much observance during their weary wanderings in the desert. Built by the wisest and most powerful of their kings, to replace the shifting tabernacle, which the well-beloved David had deemed unsuitable to the altered condition of the commonwealth, now that “peace was within their walls, and prosperity within their palaces¹,”—adorned, indeed, with an unsparing hand, and complete in all “the beauties of holiness²,” but still exhibiting the general form of its sacred prototype³, with the same disposition of parts, it remained an authentic copy of a heavenly pattern. Its principal glory was still that ark of the covenant, on which the light of the divine presence had so long rested; the same in which was placed “the testimony which the Lord had given them⁴,” (a precious autograph of which, blessed be God! we still possess a faithful transcript,) or, as it is elsewhere styled, “the book of the law⁵,” at once an historical, a legislative, and a prophetical record, comprising in one sacred manual the revelations which they were to believe, the commandments which they were to obey, and the promises in which they were to confide.

Thus we see, “the house of the Lord” recalled to the Hebrew all that he had heard of old time. It reminded him of that house of bondage from which his forefathers had been delivered. It admonished him that

¹ Psalm cxxii. 7.

² Psalm xcvi. 9.

³ The tabernacle seems to have been constructed in anticipation of the future temple:—*Ἡ δὲ*

(σκηνή) οὐδὲν μεταφερομένου καὶ συμπερινοστοῦντος ναοῦ διέφερε.—*Ant. Jud.* l. 3, c. 6.

⁴ Exodus xxv. 16.

⁵ Deut. xxxi. 26.

he belonged to a privileged race, over whose heads the destroying angel had passed, and bade him walk worthy of his high vocation. Again, it warned him that he belonged to “a stiff-necked people¹, ever grieving God by their idolatry, ever forgetful of their separate estate, and mixing with the nations around them; ever ready to abandon their marked prerogative, sighing for Egyptian comforts, and regardless of Egyptian darkness. It pointed to the punishments with which their transgressions had been visited, and the mercies which had waited upon their repentance; thus bidding him guard against his own “revolting and rebellious heart².” It told him finally of the prosperity which his nation had once enjoyed under a divinely-sanctioned race of sovereigns; and at a later day it spake to him, alas! too intelligibly, of civil strife, and foreign invasion; of rapid decay, terminating in utter downfall; of captivity in a land of strangers, and the passing away of the sceptre from Judah.

With these last and passing events was Jerusalem and its temple closely associated, but not with these alone. It was a standing record of the covenant between God and the patriarchs. It told of the faith of Abraham, “which was counted unto him for righteousness³”; of “the sure mercies of David⁴”; of the seed in whom all the nations of the world should be blessed⁵. It reflected, as in a mirror, not the past alone of Hebrew history, but the future, the glorious future, of Hebrew prophecy; those days of promise which the greater part, misinterpreting Scripture in the blindness of a carnal heart, anticipated with restless eagerness, as a time of secular dominion and national triumph; while the wiser few

¹ Exod. xxxii. 9.

² Jerem. v. 23.

³ Rom. iv. 3.

⁴ Isai. lv. 3.

⁵ Gen. xviii. 18.

prepared themselves for a spiritual restoration, a new Jerusalem, having the true glory of God¹, which the old, comparatively speaking, did but foreshadow.

On the whole, the hill of Zion, the tabernacle which found there a final abiding place, and the proud temple which was reared in its stead, supplied to the seed of Abraham a chronicle of the past and a prophecy of the future; a watchword to rally the hope of Israel in the midst of ruin and dispersion; and finally, an image of that place of rest, in which the faithful should one day be assembled, “the city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God².”

At the time when the psalm from which my text is taken was written, if it be indeed, as its title imports, the composition of David, “the house of the Lord” was still the same tabernacle which had been constructed by order of Moses in the wilderness; pitched, indeed, to be removed no more, but still a mere tent. The ark of God still dwelt “within curtains³.” Its spiritual glories, however, were then in their fullest splendour. The light of divine favour shone from between the cherubim without a cloud; a sufficient reason for the pious Israelite, who beheld in this chosen dwelling of his God a record of that high distinction which he had received from heaven, and a pledge of those future blessings which were assured to him through faith, to take up his hymn of praise, and be “glad,” indeed, when they said unto him, “Let us go into the house of the Lord.”

The temple at Jerusalem exists no longer; “one stone hath not been left there upon another which hath not been thrown down⁴.” It remained to receive him who

¹ Rev. xxi. 11. ² Heb. xi. 10. ³ 2 Sam. vii. 2. ⁴ Matt. xxiv. 2.

was “made a high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek¹,” “holy, harmless, and undefiled;” who needeth not daily, as “those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins and then for the people; for this he did once when he offered up himself².” And then its “veil was rent in twain³,” its “wall of partition broken down⁴,” its services, “the example and shadow of heavenly things⁵,” became superfluous; the dispensation under which they were ordained had passed away.

Yet werè the words of the Psalmist as surely intended, as they are expressly adapted, to find an echo in the hearts of those “upon whom the ends of the world are come⁶.” “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ⁷,” and this in a very extensive sense. Whatever “happened” to the Jews, was for our ensample, “and was written for our admonition.” It is well if we “search the Scriptures,” in the direction thus divinely pointed out. Men are apt to take up the study of the New Testament, with a far different preparation of mind. We are schooled by the world. We bring to the consideration of God’s kingdom notions and feelings, anticipations and prejudices, wholly underived from any sacred source. There is a “knowledge” which we have to unlearn before we can enter the school of our heavenly Master. I know no outward mean by which, in dependance upon the Spirit, we may so surely hope to remove these unholy preconceptions, and acquire that “meekness of wisdom,” which “cometh from above⁸,” as by long and earnest contemplation of the method of God’s dealings towards his ancient people: not so much as supplying us with

¹ Heb. vi. 20.² Heb. vii. 26, 27.³ Matt. xxvii. 51.⁴ Ephes. ii. 14.⁵ Heb. viii. 5.⁶ 1 Cor. x. 11.⁷ Gal. iii. 24.⁸ James iii. 13, 17.

rules, applicable, by parity of reasoning, to our own case, as by familiarising our thoughts and feelings to the character of the divine government generally.

I approach a subject peculiarly exposed to rude and irreverent handling, and I gladly linger in a sanctuary which none will venture to profane, hoping to bring out with me, (and if it be God's will, to communicate,) a subdued and chastened spirit, tempered by heavenly harmonies, and attuned to temple music. But it is time to quit those sacred courts. We have now to pass, as from a vestibule, into an edifice of grander dimensions, of deeper mystery, and more solemn importance. Henceforth it is of the Christian Church that we shall speak, the house of God as it is set up now and for ever in Christian lands, and more especially in our own.

Let us pause for a moment on the threshold, while we gather up our thoughts for the inquiry that awaits us. In thus entering the church through the synagogue, we are but following the footsteps of him "who leadeth Joseph like a flock¹." Yet a word of caution may perhaps be requisite. A strong and not unreasonable prejudice prevails against those who seem to place the spiritual kingdom of Messiah upon a foundation of carnal ordinances. The Jewish hierarchy is said to have afforded a platform for the cumbrous structure of ecclesiastical pretension. The church has been accused of modelling its services, with no sufficient authority, upon Jewish example. Christian ministers are believed to have adopted the names, and usurped the powers, attributable to Christ alone. "A full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, having been once offered for the sins of the whole world²," the priestly office is pronounced a

¹ Psalm LXXX. 1.

² Communion Service.

blasphemous pretence, the service of the altar a mischievous delusion. True it is, that at an early period, an allegorizing spirit may have prevailed in the church, not always guided with discretion, or kept within due limits.

The vain humour of the Gnostic may have found its way into the interpretation of Scripture without detection: mistaken analogies may have stood in the place of reasons: figurative expressions may have been literally interpreted in practice: Christian vigilance may at times have slept: early prepossessions, and deep-rooted predilections, may have been too indulgently consulted; and thus, among a people of lively fancy, surrounded by Pagan associations, a ceremonial worship may by degrees have grown up, too widely removed from Christian simplicity. The very emblem in some cases may have veiled the truth which it was intended to reveal¹. The abuse thus introduced, rather from want of caution than from any insidious motive, may in later times have furnished a machinery for secular ambition in its sacerdotal garb.

Whatever may have been the cause, the event is but too certain. The Redeemer's office was invaded by human

¹ "This our excessive number of ceremonies was so great, and many of them so dark, that they did more confound and darken, than set forth Christ's benefits unto us. And besides this, Christ's Gospel is not a ceremonial law, (as much of Moses' law was,) but it is a religion to serve God, not in bondage of the figure or shadow, but in the freedom of the Spirit; being content only with those ceremonies which do serve for a decent order and godly discipline, and such as be apt to stir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his duty to God, by some notable and special signification, whereby he might be edified. Furthermore, the most weighty cause of the abolishment of certain ceremonies was, that they were so far abused, partly by the superstitious blindness of the rude and unlearned, and partly by the insatiable avarice of such as sought more their own lucre, than the glory of God, that the abuses could not well be taken away, the thing remaining still."—See *Preface to the Book of Common Prayer*.

presumption, for base and selfish ends. To have re-vindicated the Saviour's right is the peculiar glory of the Reformation, the principles of which we have engaged, as Protestants, to uphold and to proclaim. And if, in our own time, and in our own church, there be any who would return to the "beggarly elements" from which we have been emancipated, we are bound to declare that so far as their hearts consent to their words, so far as their error resides in their moral being, and not in the powers of the understanding merely, "Christ is become to them of no effect'." But let us beware of rash judgments. There is an extreme on the other side, an ultra Protestantism (so called), against which we shall do well to guard.

Having stated the misuse to which Jewish precedent is liable; let us now consider its use.

Surely there is a true as well as a false parallel, to be drawn between the dispensations of God's mercy before and after the coming of the Saviour. The plan of our salvation did not begin to operate in those "last days," when "the Son of God was manifested'." Laid in heaven "before the foundation of the world'," it was displayed on earth before the gates of paradise were shut upon the sinning authors of our race. From that time it has been carried uninterruptedly forward to the present hour. Issuing from one source, directed to one end, developed, rather than changed, it were strange if throughout its various modifications we could not recognize some common features. Patriarchal, Jewish, Christian, it is, in fact, the same scheme in different stages of maturity.

It is not, however, in any outward resemblance, so much as in the observance of certain fixed principles, that we detect the identity. As in the works of nature the unity

¹ Gal. v. 4.

² 1 John iii. 8.

³ 1 Pet. i. 20.

of the Divine mind is evinced by that wonderful reconciliation of sameness with diversity, which physiologists delight to trace, the same idea being realized in countless adaptations, from the most simple to the most complex, from an initial rudeness, a faint and suggestive outline, to the most complete and admirable perfection; as we observe an organization, essentially of the same kind, carried up from the humblest beginnings of animal life, till it attains its limit in the fearful wonder of the human frame; so is it in the works of grace. In all its parts we perceive a regular subordination with a common tendency; the earlier typifying the later, that is to say, exhibiting the same form, wanting that fuller developement, and grander application which it subsequently exhibits. Hence the type is said to be inferior to the antitype, and hence the same event, the same person, the same assertion, is sometimes capable of several, as it were, successive interpretations, all equally conformable to the Divine intention, all equally true, and this not by a mere accommodation of outward resemblances, but by a progressive expansion of meaning. In neither case, however, is it possible to realize this idea in any positive representation; we cannot say that any given form or skeleton, however simplified, is every where to be found, but must seek the evidence of a common design in the operation of common principles, a similar end being uniformly pursued by the same sort of means.

Of these common principles, the first that I shall notice in relation to the present subject, is the separation of a part of mankind from the remainder, to be charged with a peculiar function, and invested with peculiar privileges. A given family, and again of that family, a particular branch, the posterity of Seth, of Abraham, of

Isaac, of Jacob, the Israel of God, in whom the same line is still continued, these are “children of promise.” They are *called forth* from their human brethren, and form a distinct and visible *congregation*, a CHURCH. The word which we so translate, conveys both these notions, the first in its etymology, the second in its ordinary usage. Thus, in the words of a most learned English divine, “The two moieties of the people of God, the one before, the other after the redemption performed by Christ, may both be rightly, and most aptly named, the Church of God¹.”

This outward calling is referable, in all cases, only to the inscrutable purpose and free grace of God. “It is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy².” Nevertheless it is connected inseparably with the foreknowledge of the Supreme reason, and not merely consistent with eternal justice, but conducive to the fullest display of heavenly mercy, and the most entire vindication of the divine honour. It is not merely reconcilable with “God’s promises, as generally set forth in Scripture³,” but the very ground on which they rest: not merely compatible with the free agency of man, but the condition of whatever voluntary obedience we can ever pay to God’s expressed will.

Wherever this elect congregation is convened, it is distinguished by the special presence of God. The mode of manifestation varies, but it is in every place effected through the instrumentality of that Divine Word, by whom the worlds were made, and are upheld⁴, the same who assumed our nature, and “dwelt among us⁵.” “No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten

¹ FIELD, *On the Church*, b. i. c. 5.

² Rom. ix. 16.

³ Seventeenth Article of Religion.

⁴ Heb. i. 2, 3.

⁵ John i. 14.

Son, who is in the bosom of his Father, he hath declared him¹." He is the revealed I AM, who appeared in fire, and spoke to the prophets; the Mediator between God and man; the Angel of the covenant², (so reputed by the Jews themselves,) as well before as after his appearance in the person of Christ.

The law of Moses was but added "because of transgression,"—a parenthesis in the divine economy; yet this was "ordained," disposed, and set in order, "through the ministration of angels," the authentic embassy of heaven, "in the hands of a Mediator," God being a party to the solemn compact. Compare with this the language of St. Paul, "we" the ministers of the Gospel, "are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us³."

The coming of Messiah in the flesh thus forms a central point between the two dispensations, to which the lines of each have their true convergence, prophetic in the one, commemorative in the other, merely typical, merely formal and representative, in neither. If the first covenant had "ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary⁴," and if these form the ordinary channels of Jehovah's government, the organs of his will, the manifestations of his presence, and the earnest of his mercy, it is Christ to whom they owe their conditional efficacy, Christ from whom they receive their ceremonial holiness, Christ, the Saviour of the world, operating in and by his own appointed means. So, under the second covenant, if we find the kingdom of heaven placed under a given administration; if we find special blessings attached to particular persons, offices, and things; if prayer be answered, the word made effectual, preaching accom-

¹ John i. 18.

² POTTER, *On Church Government*, chap. ii.
Notes, number xiv.

³ 2 Cor. v. 20.

GURNEY'S *Biblical Notes*,
⁴ Heb. ix. 1.

panied with power, assemblies specially sanctioned; if regeneration come by water; if the Holy Ghost be given by the imposition of hands, and Christ be really present in the symbols of his body and blood;—in whatever sense, and with whatever limitation these promises are to be taken, it is still the same eternal Word, confirming the pledges of his favours, and communicating the first fruits of his Spirit, according to a given system, which it is our duty—say rather, our blessed privilege, and only wisdom, to study with submissive reverence, and in adoring silence.

The Sun of righteousness has risen with healing on his wings. The night, which preceded his advent, star-lit as it was, and full of the handiwork of the Almighty, was ruled by lesser luminaries, that shone with a faint and borrowed ray; lights that grew dim in the dawning twilight that announced his near approach, and were finally extinguished in the full effulgence of the Christian day. Nevertheless we see him not yet “as he is.” They who beheld his glory, while he tarried in this lower firmament, saw him through a thin and cloudless atmosphere, yet shorn of his beams. Even this fell far short of an immediate intuition. A darker medium now intercepts his visible semblance, which yet transmits a portion of his light. What if in certain cases it exhibit a luminous image of that sovereign splendour, a transparent symbol, filled with the light which it conveys? An earthly ministration, temple ordinances, a written word, appointed sacraments; these are now the ordinary media of our communication with the Lord of glory, and “through him we have access *by one Spirit* to the Father¹”; for it is the Spirit that renders these effectual. Dare we say, by the Spirit *without* these?

¹ Eph. ii. 18.

We read of a city “that hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it¹ ;” no need of any earthly dispensation, “for signs or for seasons, for days or for years² ;” “for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb was the light thereof³ .” In that heavenly city the prophet beheld *no temple*⁴ . Thither let us ascend in heart and mind, but let us not presumptuously attempt, while upon earth, to anticipate that final consummation. Not till “that which is perfect is come,” shall “that which is in part be done away⁵ .”

“By faith are we saved, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God⁶ .” This is again one of those common principles, by which the plan of our salvation is regulated in all its parts. By faith “the elders,” both before and under the Mosaic covenant, “obtained a good report⁷ ;” but it did not in their case, and why should it in ours, supersede the use of such outward means of grace, as carry with them a divine sanction, and belong to the revealed “counsel of God.” Men gladly accept the proffered mercy of their Lord, but how it is to be appropriated they are seldom careful to inquire. Some rely on ceremonial observances⁸ , some on moral fitness, some on spiritual election. Whether the last of these requisites can ever exist without the second, or either, in the ordinary course of God’s providence, without the first, is a question to be solved, not according to any system of our own, but by an attentive and reverent study of that *given* system of which the Bible is a faithful record, and the *Catholic* church a living exponent.

¹ Rev. xxi. 23. ² Gen. i. 14.

³ Rev. xxi. 23. ⁴ Rev. xxi. 22.

⁵ 1 Cor. xiii. 10. ⁶ Eph. ii. 8.

⁷ Heb. xi. 2, et passim.

⁸ *Θρησκευα*, not mere ritual, but all the outward service of religion, including charitable deeds, external purity, fasting, acts of devotion, &c.—James i. 27.

Lastly, the Jewish Church is identical with the Christian in its objects. Both were constituted to keep alive a knowledge of God's truth in a benighted world, to make head against the corruption of manners everywhere prevalent among mankind, and to provide a remedy for the inherent depravity of human nature, the mortal disease of the human soul.

The subordinate methods taken under the first of these dispensations to promote this end, are very instructive. Passing over such parts of the scheme as are evidently occasional and transitory, arising out of the particular history and local circumstances of the Israelites, and such again as are principally typical and preparatory, we may notice some which appear to rest on different and permanent grounds. Of these the most striking is the separation of a peculiar order of men from the great body of the people, not alone for the performance of direct religious offices in a restricted sense, but to educate and inform the mind of the people generally; in a word, to preserve and promote, under the warrant of divine authority, and with the force of a national establishment, the intellectual, moral, and religious interests of the community at large. The annexation of lands, and other fixed sources of revenue, to this order, for their perpetual and independent support, may be taken not so much as the just reward of their services, as the condition under which alone they could be rendered effectual. This wholesome provision was not peculiar to the Jews. Few nations have been so sunk in ignorance, or so blinded by sensuality, as not to feel that the mind is of more worth than the body;—intellectual pursuits, whether in relation to time, or to eternity, more honourable, and not less necessary in an extended view, than the crafts which

minister to the support or gratification of the animal frame. The systems organized for this purpose have everywhere been placed under the guaranty of religion. The distinction between mental and religious culture is, indeed, of comparatively modern date. Assuredly the care of both remained long in the same hands in every civilized nation. Thus much has resulted from the common instincts of mankind; but in the Hebrew commonwealth this principle comes before us with the recommendation of omniscient wisdom, and the authority of divine enactment. Now we know that the same order of things has, in fact, subsisted in the Christian Church, if not from its first foundation, at least from the time of its complete establishment to the present day: and as the original institution was not, in this respect, merely occasional; as the object remains substantially the same, the circumstances sufficiently parallel, we cannot but regard it as of perpetual expediency, in the highest behalf, and therefore of perpetual obligation. The distinction of clergy and laity; the allotment of a certain range of ecclesiastical functions, including those strictly sacerdotal, to be performed more or less exclusively by the former, and their permanent maintenance by fixed and independent revenues, is thus proved to be no invention of later or even Christian times. The precedent, of which it is the continuation rather than the repetition, carries with it, at the least, that favourable presumption which forms one constituent of moral proof. And so I leave it for the present, to be confirmed and illustrated by subsequent and still more cogent considerations.

Again, we observe in the procedures of Almighty God, as they are shown to us in the Old Testament, an indulgence to the necessities, a consideration of the

weaknesses, an attention to the circumstances of his chosen people, equally consolatory and instructive¹. Every page of holy writ supplies a proof of this statement, if any were wanting. Applied to our own times and circumstances, it encourages us in the belief that such accommodations as have taken place from time to time in the outward administration of the Church to the varying character of the people among whom it has to act, may be accompanied by the divine blessing; that practices in themselves indifferent may lawfully be employed in divine offices, as helps to human infirmity; that consecrated buildings, solemn music, peculiar vestments, emblematic rites, are things in themselves unobjectionable, and may be adopted, varied, and disposed by human authority, duly constituted in the Church²; nay, that in certain cases, and within certain limits, the pressure of necessity may be pleaded in excuse for some relaxations of ceremonial discipline, which, not always the best that can be imagined, but the best that may be practised, is, we trust, accepted, not for what it is, but for the

¹ SPENCER, *De Legibus Hebræorum*, Lib. iii. Præf. et passim. Καθάπερ πατήρ φιλόστοργος διὰ πολλοῦ χρόνου τὸν υἱὸν τὸν ἑαυτοῦ μιαιοῖς ἀνθρώποις καὶ φθορεῦσι καὶ ἀσώτοις συναστρεφέντα, καὶ πολλῆς ἀπολαύσαντα τροφῆς λαβὼν, μετὰ ἀσφαλείας καὶ σεμνότητος ἐπὶ πλείονι καθίστησιν αὐτὸν ἀφθονία, ὥστε μήτε στενοχωρηθέντα τῶν προτέρων μνήμην λαβεῖν μήτε εἰς ἐπιθυμίαν ἐκείνων ἐλθεῖν· οὕτω καὶ ὁ Θεὸς βλέπων τοὺς Ἰουδαίους περὶ τὰ αἰσθητὰ ἐπτοημένους, καὶ ἐν τουτοῖς πολλὴν ποιεῖται

τὴν ὑπερβολὴν ὥστε αὐτοὺς μηδέποτε εἰς ἐπιθυμίαν τῶν Αἰγυπτίων, ἢ τῶν παρ' Αἰγυπτίοις ἐλθεῖν.—CHRYST. *Hom. in Diem Natal. Christi*, p. 358, tom. ii. Ed. Ben.

² Οὐ τοίνυν ἱερέων δεόμενος, οὐδὲ κνίσσης ὀριγνόμενος, θυεῖν προσέταξεν ὁ Θεὸς, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἀρρώστούντων ἰατροῦν τὰ πάθη· οὕτω δὲ καὶ τὰ τῶν εὐήχων ὀργάνων ἡνέσχετο· οὐ τῇ τούτων ἁρμονίᾳ τερπόμενος, ἀλλὰ κατὰ βραχὺ παύων τῶν εἰδώλων τὸν πλάνον, κ. τ. λ.—THEOD. tom. iv. serm. 7, p. 585.

heartly desires of those who would fain have it what it should be.

To conclude:—In thus seeking to illustrate the later branches of the divine economy by a comparison with the earlier, we have the express warrant of the Lord himself, and of his inspired apostles. It is no artifice of man's wisdom. In adopting the terms of the elder dispensation in an extended, and what is called a spiritual sense, we are fortified by the same examples. In the language of St. Paul and St. Peter, we are “children of promise¹,” “the Israel of God²,” “a royal priesthood, and a holy nation³,” “we have come unto Mount Sion⁴, and to the heavenly Jerusalem.” “We have a high-priest, over the house of God⁵.” “We have an altar⁶.” In the use of these terms, therefore, we are fully justified. Their Christian signification is fixed by apostolic usage, of which we shall judge ill, if we see in it no more than an allowable play of fancy, or an accommodation to Jewish prepossessions. They are used in *contrast* to the carnal Judaism of the apostles' time, when the blinding veil of prejudice lay most heavily upon the heart of Israel; but in assertion of that *implicit* sense, which God's saints, in whatever age, the children of faithful Abraham, had always attached to them, and which was now made fully manifest.

In my next discourse I shall resume the subject which the above observations have in some degree interrupted, passing, as above indicated, from the Jewish temple to the Christian Church, with a particular reference to our own religious establishment, considered in a national point of view. The several questions thus brought before our notice, relative to the nature and

¹ Gal. iv. 28.

² Gal. vi. 16.

³ 1 Pet. ii. 5. 9.

⁴ Heb. xii. 22.

⁵ Heb. x. 21.

⁶ Heb. xiii. 10.

functions of the Christian Church in its catholic definition, as exhibited in the particular communities of which it consists, will be separately examined as they occur, with the several relations, civil and ecclesiastical, political and spiritual, sustained by the latter, particularly in our own country, and in the present crisis. The series of discourses thus announced, if, by the divine blessing, I be enabled and permitted to fulfil my purpose, is intended as a humble attempt to set forth and illustrate **THE SCRIPTURAL CHARACTER OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH.**

SERMON II.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND CONSIDERED IN A NATIONAL POINT OF VIEW.

PSALM cxxii. 6, 7.

*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.
Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.*

THE considerations which may be supposed to have led the Psalmist to this pious conclusion, have already come under our review. In the verses which follow, he gives his own account of the matter. “For my brethren and companions’ sake:” on behalf of my fellow-citizens and fellow-worshippers, I will now say, “Peace be within thee.” But above all, “For the sake of the house of the Lord our God,” for the interest of religion, and for the glory of Jehovah, “I will seek to do thee good.” By his firm adhesion to the institutions of his nation, by his example and by his prayers, he would maintain the honour of that temple in which, as we have seen, the pious Israelite beheld a shrine of solemn memory, a seat of covenanted mercy, and a sanctuary of awful hope.

What the temple on Mount Sion was to the Israelite of old, the church is now to that spiritual Israel, which bears the name and obeys the laws of Christ. What the former typified, the latter has fulfilled. A worship of spirit and of truth has succeeded to one of ceremonial observance; the liberty of the Gospel to the yoke of the Law. The restrictions of time and place have been removed. That which was particular, local, and tran-

sitory, is now catholic, unlimited, permanent. Jerusalem is indeed but one. It may be extended, but it cannot be multiplied. Though in particular places it may be torn by faction or divided by schism, though its hedge may be taken down, and its walls broken up, yet is the true Jerusalem everywhere “builded as a city that is at unity in itself¹,” single in its foundation, comprehensive in its plan, uniform in its superstructure. Our Church is only one, but it follows us to the ends of the earth, and in this happy land is brought to our own doors. In every town, almost in every village, and throughout every rural district, has been erected a house of prayer, whither we are invited to bring our oblations and to pay our solemn vows unto the Lord. And, oh! may every English Christian exclaim, as he enters those hallowed structures, “Lord, I have loved the habitation of thine house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth².”

The analogy here touched upon may be still further pursued. What the temple, with its established service, was to the Jews, as a nation, the church and its stated ordinances are to us *as Englishmen*; an institution not merely entitled to our formal allegiance from the divine sanction which it claims, but recommended to our best affections by the most venerable and most endearing associations, by past recollections, by present comforts, and by future hopes. Planted in these islands in the remotest age of Christian antiquity, if not by the great apostle of the Gentiles himself, at least by some of his immediate successors,—a branch of that holy church universal in which we profess to believe, it took root, and flourished, and bore fruit abundantly. Storms indeed have swept over it from time to time, and scattered its

¹ Psalm cxxii. 3.

² Psalm xxvi. 8.

goodly blossoms to the winds. More than once it may be said to have been levelled with the ground. But it has never been rooted up. Again, after the appointed period of its chastisement, it has sprung up in the sunshine of divine favour, to bear a richer fruitage and exhibit a more vigorous life.

But the Church of Christ, in all its parts, has suffered more from internal corruption than from external violence; never, perhaps, from the latter, except as the consequence and punishment of the former. A widespread perversion, the nature and causes of which are clearly laid down in Holy Writ, changed the appointed symbols of the Christian faith into idols, the object of a blind and carnal worship. The inventions of man took the place of the commandments of God; and, in proportion as the *love* of the truth grew faint, the *knowledge* of the truth grew dim. The Church in these islands did not escape the general infection. Here, as elsewhere, the power of that wicked one was severely felt, though not without opposition. In the darkest time this nation was never left without a witness for Christ; and when at length it pleased the great Head of the Church to disperse the cloud of error which had so long hung over it, the Church of England was the first to hail the coming light, and among the first to rejoice in its beams. In the great work of reformation few were more bold, none so discreet, few knew how to temper their holy fearlessness with so much meekness, or to guide it with so much wisdom, as the great confessors from whom the Church of England received those important modifications, in virtue of which they have sometimes been unadvisedly named its founders; a title, however, which they would themselves have heard with astonishment and rejected

with an anxious concern. The holy martyrs of the Reformation, whether of the clergy or the laity, sought rather to restore what had been lost, than to supply what should be new. They shed their blood in the assertion of a right which they affected no authority to create, and in the maintenance of doctrines which they did not pretend to have discovered. The English presbyter counts it among his many privileges that he can number the martyred bishops of that day of trial as his fathers in the faith; he rejoices to have received his ordination through their hands; but that which they transmitted they had themselves inherited.

And here, if time served, it would be most grateful to my feelings to speak of that long and shining list of good, and wise, and learned men, who from the earliest period even to our own times, have shed the light of their piety and wisdom on this Church and nation. Stars are they in God's spiritual firmament, for they have "turned many to righteousness¹." And, oh! if we pleased, if our minds were not wholly set upon vanity, how might we yet be edified by their examples, and informed by their godly writings! They "being dead, yet speak." Could the Jewish temple boast of recollections more venerable, more affecting than these?

Other considerations there are, of a different kind, connected with this part of my subject, on which I cannot enlarge, but which must not be passed over altogether without notice. Our Church is bound to us, not merely as churchmen, but as citizens,—as patriots, if the term be admissible, and lovers of our country. That Church of which we have spoken, the precious heir-loom which we

¹ Dan. xii. 3.

have received from our fathers, and which we trust to hand down, if it be God's will, uninjured to our children, has been, from the earliest ages, identified with the church of the nation. Kings have been its "nursing fathers, and queens its nursing mothers." In this relation, it forms an integral part of that law, which protects our lives, our characters, and our property, which secures our homes from the robber on the one hand, and from the despot on the other; our country from internal anarchy and foreign dominion, the oppression of foreign potentates, and the interference of foreign priests.

Such, at least, has hitherto been its position. The tie that binds the Church and the State together, hallowed by time, if not in itself sacred and inviolable, has been, as we know, tampered with, and partially loosened. Hitherto, however, the two institutions have formed one body, distinct, yet united, two-fold in idea, one in fact; and in this double capacity, the English Church has dispensed to all classes of the community such solid benefits, even of a temporal kind, as might alone prevent a lover of his country from attempting to dissolve or weaken the connexion. The exertions made by the Church, whether collectively or by the hands of individual clergymen, to improve the temporal condition of mankind, have been carried on from age to age with an efficacy not the less beneficial, because it is silent and unobtrusive. Such, indeed, is the mode of acting which the Church would always most willingly observe. Even in those associated efforts, which from their nature court publicity, an unboastful moderation has ever characterised its proceedings; while nothing but the pressure of the times and the gross misrepresentations by which they have been assailed,

could have induced the clergy, as a body, to bring their parochial ministrations, their labours, or their charities, before the public eye.

I speak of the past: the present is a time of change, and the future known to us only in those grand features which the book of Revelation has disclosed. Within these sacred walls, in which the voice of prayer and praise has been for many centuries lifted up, the infant, washed in the laver of regeneration, is grafted into the body of Christ's holy Church. Here the marriage-vow has been plighted, ratified, and blest. In these sacred precincts repose the bones of our fathers. There we have buried our own dead, those whom we ourselves have known and loved, and there, in our appointed hour, we hope to lie down in peace by their side. I will not anticipate a time, when the efforts of those who would break asunder these holy ties shall be crowned with success. So long as they remain unbroken, there needs no more to prove that the Church of this nation is bound to the affections and to the respect of all that share its benefits (and who is excluded?) by every pious, every patriotic, every domestic feeling, the golden links of a chain which I pray God may never be torn in sunder.

I have spoken of past recollections; these, however, form but the smallest part of the reasons which should attach the English Christian to his national Church. Let me now speak of the present advantage to be derived from its communion, the actual and immediate comforts to be found within its pale.

Of the spiritual benefits to be derived from its communion, my present subject leads me to speak only in general terms. To have received from this our holy mother the first beginnings of spiritual life, to have been placed, as it

were, in her arms, and brought up from earliest infancy upon her bosom; to have been trained under her auspices, “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;” to have made our first public profession of faith before a congregation of her members; to have enjoyed the benefits of her authorized instructions; to have been blessed and confirmed, as far as our hearts have been answerable to the good intent shown, and to the edifying rite appointed, at various times, and in divers manners, by her apostolical ministry; to have worshipped with our brethren in her sacred buildings, according to her ancient, pious, and comprehensive formularies; to have “heard in our own tongue the wonderful works of God,” as contained in Holy Scripture; to have the Bible faithfully translated, freely dispersed, and fully expounded; to have listened, week by week, to a “form of doctrine,” continually tested by that inspired record, guarded, so far as any human provision may avail, by Catholic creeds, by Scriptural articles, by an orthodox Liturgy, and an expressive ritual; above all, to have joined in the celebration of those holy mysteries, the *due* participation of which assures us that we are very members of the mystical body of Christ, which is the blessed company of all faithful people: these, indeed, are actual and present benefits, of which we are all invited to partake,—benefits such as the temple could only exhibit in shadow, could only communicate to those who lived in the *implicit* faith of Christ; to these in part only, darkly, and, as it were, in secret. Their inestimable value to us requires that they should be kept apart from every lower consideration. If they have filled a place reverently assigned to them in a political system, fraught with important civil advantages, they are not of its essence; and as they admit, so they require to be studied

in and for themselves. We are now considering the Church not *so much* in its relation to the souls of its individual members, except by way of inference, as in a national point of view.

And first, as the great organ of public education in its widest sense, the nation is deeply and increasingly indebted to the established Church. I do not speak of the clergy alone, who are well content to discharge their several duties in the commonwealth as matters of course; among the rest, their laborious, and, for the most part, humble office of teachers in the scholastic sense:—school-masters and tutors, guides and superintendants of youth, in every class of society, almost from infancy to man's estate, and during the first years of manhood; putting forward no claims to respect, but such as may be due to their personal merits. If this be withholden, they neither flag nor murmur, because their position enables, and their duty requires, them to act as independent functionaries, neither receiving their commission, nor expecting their reward, from any number of given individuals, however great, neither from the people, nor from their governors, as such, but from the nation at large, in its true definition, as represented by its laws and institutions, its hereditary manners, and standard literature, the true exponents of the national will. I speak of the system itself, and of those noble foundations by which it is supported. It is a fact that the clergy have ever been, and still continue to be, the general purveyors of intellectual knowledge, not only among the higher orders in our universities, and great public schools, but among the poorest of the poor, in the crowded alley, and in the lonely hamlet; and this not only as stewards of revenues, bequeathed to them for this purpose, or as paid functionaries in the discharge of

their regular duties, but by voluntary efforts, made in their professional capacity, and to which they are led by a sort of moral compulsion, such as can be brought to act upon no other description of men. Whether this state of things shall be allowed to continue, or be now laid aside, as barbarous and obsolete, is a cause still pending at the bar of public opinion. If knowledge, for its own sake, or merely as a step to worldly advancement, be the object pursued, it is possible that a great change may be at hand; with no sufficient justification however, even in this behalf, either from reason or experience. It is likely that a fixed and independent body, themselves highly as well as carefully educated, relieved from the pressure of worldly pursuits, and shut out from the other paths of worldly honour, will, in the long run, dispense *more*, as well as better, knowledge than could by any other means be acquired, preserved, or diffused. But if knowledge, chastened and sanctified by its connexion with religion, be the thing desired, if the final cause, the *use* of knowledge, its subservience to moral improvement, and its coincidence with absolute truth, be taken into the account, then shall we continue to confide the interests of education to the national church, and reckon this among the many present benefits of which it is the parent.

Certain it is, the clergy not merely handed down the torch of learning through long ages of increasing barbarism, but still continue to feed and trim it; to keep up its light, and to preserve it pure. It is by their hands that it is carried to the most remote, neglected, and repulsive districts. It burns not in the cloister alone, the court, or the city, where the encouragement of the wealthy, the favour of the polite, and the sympathy of the discerning,

supply a genial atmosphere, but throughout the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; in places where but for the parochial institutions of a national Church, the simplicity of the village would have been no better than a rude, a savage, and a brutal ignorance, such as it is, wherever, from extent of space, or excess of population, the Church system is not in effectual operation. Alas! the instances are even too numerous, and too striking.

I have here touched a chord which it is impossible for me to pursue at present, through all its varied and affecting modulations—the pastoral character of the Established Church, the advantages of which, considered even in a temporal point of view, it would be difficult to overstate. The maintenance of social order, the support of law, the spread of civilization, the correction of public manners, such are among the tendencies, sometimes suspended by unfavourable accident, and occasional imperfection, often checked by want of adequate means, but still renewed, after the temporary interruption, and capable of indefinite extension: such, I repeat, are among the tendencies, how beneficial, needs no words to set forth, of the system now and for ages past, adopted by the national Church, and which a religious establishment can alone successfully uphold.

Thus far I have endeavoured to exhibit, in general terms, the excellence of our Christian Zion, the temple and its services, under the second covenant, as they have been set up amongst us here, by our forefathers, and predecessors in the faith. On its several ordinances, separately considered, I shall hope to speak hereafter. I have spoken of the English Church as linked to the affections of its Christian members, by ties not less binding than those

which attached the natural seed of Abraham, the Church of God as it existed before the coming of the Saviour, to the temple at Jerusalem, by past recollections, and by present benefits. It only remains for me to complete the parallel, by pointing reverently to those future hopes, foreshadowed by both, though with increased distinctness by the later dispensation. "Of the day and the hour," when this glorious fulfilment will take place, "knoweth no man," not even the Son, in his filial character, but the Father only. Of its nature we know little more than that it is a state of blessedness, such as "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive¹:" a permanence of glory, to be enjoyed in that Jerusalem which is above, by "the Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven."

And though we be sore straitened, waiting for the appearance of our Lord and master, and praying that he may shortly "accomplish the number of his elect, and hasten his kingdom," yet are we not left without "a pattern and example of heavenly things;" while we are taught to recognize in the faithful here on earth, an image of that blessed society, composed of angels, and the glorified spirits of "just men made perfect," who daily circle the eternal throne with hymns of thanksgiving, and solemn attributions of praise.

Even here the Lamb is in the midst of us, though we cannot see him as he is. Even here we have our Sabbaths, when we may go up into the mount, and enjoy, through faith in the use of those ordinances which Christ has left with his church, some glimpses of our Saviour, not as he is seen by an unbelieving world, with "no

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 9.

beauty that we should desire him," but clad in shining robes, and with a countenance of heavenly joy.

Thus privileged, shall not the Christian be glad when they say unto him, "Let us go up into the house of the Lord," and exclaim as he treads its hallowed courts, "It is good for me to be here." "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of the Lord, than dwell in the tents of the ungodly¹."

Such is the Church of this nation, in an historical and national point of view. I cannot, however, dismiss this part of my subject, without a few words of practical application. We are too apt to think of the Church as of something apart from ourselves; as a particular description of property, or a peculiar order of men. This is a mistake as dangerous as it is common. It has left the clergy to fight the sacred cause of established religion, not merely single-handed, but at a disadvantage, amid the general lukewarmness and partial disaffection of the nation at large. The Church of England, however administered, however represented, is the great congregation of which it is composed. It is their own rights, it is their own privileges, it is the daily benefits, precious beyond the price of rubies, enjoyed by every member of the Anglican Church, and in no small degree by those who disclaim that title, which ask for their protecting love.

If this were a mere question of social policy, it would deserve, from its incalculable importance to the temporal interests of the nation, more than all the attention which it has received. Our lot has been cast in a fair land. I

¹ Psalm LXXXIV. 10.

will not descant on the large measure of civil and religious freedom which we have so long enjoyed, on the security which has hitherto for many ages attached to our persons and our property, on the spread of education, on the pre-eminence which Britain still retains in arts and manufactures, in agriculture and commerce. I will do no more than allude to that admirable form of government to which, under God, these blessings are mainly to be attributed:—that happily adjusted balance of power, ever corrected by the checks of public opinion, and acting, through its union with the Church, with a moral, as well as with a physical force; to our long comparative exemption from famine and pestilence, and above all, to our immunity from the worst horrors of war. Our young men have, indeed, abundantly partaken of its perils, its hardships, and its renown; but our women, our children, our churches, and our homes,—these have been spared. Shall we then attribute so signal a protection to a succession of happy accidents,—to the devices of far-sighted politicians, or in a vague way, to the favour of Providence? Is it not referable ultimately to the moral and religious character of the people, and to the various influences to which this has been continually subjected, and by which it has been gradually formed? Of these favourable influences, shall we not reckon, as at once the most widely, and the most permanently operative, the establishment of a national Church, through long ages the dispenser and upholder of the best wisdom, and the truest knowledge,—a Church which has proved itself from the Reformation to the present hour, at once a bulwark of religious toleration, and an anchor of the Catholic faith? “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee.”

Only in the sanctuary of Jehovah, listening to the dictates of conscience, yielding to the suggestive instincts of piety, consulting the oracles of God, can we reason justly on the materials supplied by observation. There are solemn truths which religious men are not slow to acknowledge, but which are seldom deeply apprehended even by them, and never obtain any general credit, except in critical times, under circumstances of strong excitement, when the crust of habitual worldly thoughts, in which the popular mind is incased, being broken up, some rays of a diviner light find a sudden entrance'. Of these there is none more certain, or less regarded, than the providential government of nations, as reflected in *all* the events, whether of good or evil, by which they are visited, not excepting those which are commonly attributed to the course of nature. National blessings, long misused, will infallibly draw down national calamities, whether we will read the handwriting of divine displeasure, or whether we will not. We have needed, and we

¹ "It is with nations as with individuals. In tranquil moods and peaceable times we are quite *practical*. Facts only and cool common sense are then in fashion. But let the winds of passion swell, and straightway men begin to generalize; to connect by remotest analogies; to express the most universal positions of reason, in the most glowing figures of fancy; in short, to feel particular truths and mere facts as poor, cold, narrow, and incommensurate with their feelings.

"The apostle of the Gentiles quoted from a Greek comic poet. Let it not then be condemned as unreasonable or out of place, if I

remind you, that in the intuitive knowledge of this truth, and with his wonted fidelity to nature, our own great poet has placed the greater number of his profoundest maxims and general truths, not in the mouths of men at ease, but of men under the influence of passion, when the mighty thoughts overmaster and become the tyrants of the mind that brought them forth. In his *Lear*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, principles of deepest insight and widest interest fly off like sparks from the glowing iron under the loud forge-hammer."—*The Statesman's Manual*, by S. T. COLERIDGE, p. 18.

have received, of late years, many and various warnings. May they prove effectual! May the Lord have no more, and not again to plead with us in His anger, with famine, with pestilence, or with blood! Hitherto we have been remarkably favoured: but should it please the Almighty Father of our spirits to reverse the method of his dealings towards us; should anarchy ever take the place of order; should the rights of property be violated, and life itself become insecure; should the ministers of our holy religion, and the sacred edifices in which they officiate, cease to be respected; should trade stagnate, and the arts of life decline and fail; should the cry of hunger be heard in our streets, and the moans of a wasting disease in our chambers; above all, should our fields again reek with carnage, and our streams run red with blood;—may God avert these evils from us, and remove them from our sister land in which they have long been rife!—then shall we know and feel how much we have received, both in the way of temporal and spiritual good; how dearly we ought to have prized our blessings, how gratefully to have acknowledged, how liberally to have employed, how carefully, how religiously to have preserved them.

How it becomes us, as Christians and Churchmen, to extend our protecting care over the admirable institutions of our country, as they have been handed down to us by our fathers; how in particular we should testify our attachment to our national and ancestral Church, that hallowed structure from which violent hands are with difficulty withholden, is a question too extensive, and of too mixed a character for the present occasion. To one point, however, the language of the text seems to invite our attention. *Pray* for the peace of our spiritual Jerusalem,—our country contemplated as a land of Christian

ministration, and temple privileges, a land in which the light of Heaven is fully revealed and duly dispensed; for our country, in so far as the reign of grace is therein set up, and the kingdom of Christ made manifest; for our country, that this inestimable blessing may be more widely diffused and more distinctly acknowledged; that we may all receive and hold fast the pure and catholic faith once delivered to the saints; the doctrine of the cross, CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED. They shall prosper who love their country *thus*.

Never were the prayers of the faithful more needed. Never was it more necessary to tighten the bands of love which unite the Englishman to the land of his fathers, to his hearth, and his altar; to all that use has approved and time hallowed, whether decent custom or wholesome enactment; in particular to the forms and to the spirit of his ancient Church. "For our brethren and companions' sake," as linked together in the close and holy bond of spiritual communion; for the sake of our children and our children's children, "unto the third and fourth generation;" for the sake of our brethren and companions, our fellow-citizens in distant countries and in foreign realms; for the sake of those "who follow not with us," in our own,—to each and all of whom the English Church has ever been "a light placed on a candlestick," and "a city set upon the hill," illuminating and protecting far beyond her immediate pale, let us now say, "peace be within thee." Above all, for the sake of the Lord who bought us, for the sake of God's glory, and for "the truth as it is in Jesus," because of the house of the Lord our God, let us say, "I will seek thy good."

By a strict and unshrinking Church membership; by a faithful adherence to sound doctrine, and a reverent

attention to the decencies of social worship; by a dutiful submission to lawfully constituted authority, and an affectionate regard to the wants and claims of our weaker brethren; above all, by exhibiting in the continual tenour of our lives a visible demonstration, that the form of Christianity is *not* a mere system of outward observance, but a well of living water springing up unto everlasting life;—in this way, if in no other,—in this way more than any other, let every Christian congregation evince to each other, and to the world without, that they know what they have received, and that they will keep it to the latter end.

So shall we prove ourselves the children of our fathers; so shall we prove ourselves worthy depositaries of that sacred ark, which our ancestors, after many a hard-won victory, and many a well-borne reverse, have delivered into our hands, again to be exposed to worse than Philistine aggression, to treachery, to violence, and to profanation; again, (we pray and trust,) again to be rescued by the hands of the faithful, and fixed, for ever fixed, in fuller beauty and in surer strength, upon the summit of our English Sion. So shall we enjoy all the solace that can flow from a purified heart and a clear conscience, (our own souls delivered from the evil to come,) from spiritual communion, and all “the beauty of holiness;” from the pursuit of divine truth, and the sense of our Saviour’s love. So shall we pass through a vain, a transient, an imperfect world; a land of shadowy outline and faint suggestions; Jerusalem on earth and in captivity, to that which is above. “Verily there remaineth a rest to the people of God.”

SERMON III.

COMMON PRAYER.

 PART I. ON THE TEMPER OF MIND PROPER FOR THE HOUSE
OF PRAYER.

JOHN iv. 24.

*God is a spirit: and they who worship him must worship him in spirit
and in truth.*

IN setting forth the claims of the English Church to the attachment and strict conformity of her members, which is the immediate object of these discourses, as well as in recommending the Scriptural character of her ordinances to the candid consideration of those by whom that title is disclaimed, it would be doing less than justice to her admirable Liturgy if we did not make it the subject of a separate examination. It is by this, perhaps, more than by any other characteristic, that the Church of England is generally known and distinguished. It is therefore very important that so marked and peculiar a feature should be seen from the first, fully and correctly.

I propose to treat the subject *practically*: that is to say, as it involves a question of duty, in reference to existing circumstances and actual wants. I shall, therefore, hope to be excused if I commence with a few words on the feelings and views with which, as I think, the inquiry should be prosecuted.

In the words addressed by the Samaritan woman to our Lord, we have a striking instance of the perplexity

occasioned, even in a worldly mind, by opposing systems of worship, each advancing exclusive pretensions, and alleging plausible reasons in their support. "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship'." Here is a natural prepossession in favour of a local and hereditary practice, met by the claims of a rival scheme, supported by many evident proofs, and recommended by the most respectable authority. In referring this national controversy to the decision of a Jewish doctor, however surprised by his courtesy and encouraged by his condescension, "a woman of Samaria," could hardly have anticipated an answer favourable to her own views. What could be expected from a Jew, however gentle and amiable in his personal character, but a re-assertion of that uncompromising creed which excluded her countrymen from the covenant of promise, as heretics and schismatics, almost as heathens and as strangers? But he was a prophet with whom she spake, though he came from Jerusalem; and an openness to receive conviction on reasonable grounds seems to mark her conduct throughout the whole of the transaction. Our Saviour does *not* resolve her doubts by involving both systems in a common censure, or even by representing them both as *similarly* abrogated. "Woman, believe me," thus the mysterious stranger replies, "the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: *for salvation is of the Jews.*" As if he had said, salvation does indeed originate with God's ancient people, but it will now go forth into the world in a manner equally unexpected and

¹ John iv. 19, 20.

surprising, through the establishment of a comprehensive dispensation, intended for all mankind. "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship him." The time has arrived, when the narrow household of faith, of which Jerusalem is the centre, shall be expanded into a universal Church, characterized by a spiritual worship, corresponding to the nature of that Being to whom it is addressed. "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth¹."

Alas ! the contest between Gerizim and Jerusalem is still unsettled. On the one hand we have arbitrary modes of worship, wilfully set up, and resolutely maintained, till at length they have grown into fixed institutions, upholden by a faithful band of hereditary adherents, many of whom evidently content themselves with the Samaritan plea, "We serve God as we have been taught by our fathers. They had doubtless good reasons for what they did, and we, their descendants, do well to walk in their steps." Be it so. We admit your principle ; we have no quarrel with your feeling. Only follow up the same reasoning a little further, and we are content to abide the issue. If your fathers had thought as you do, they would never have been the authors of a separating Church. They would have continued to worship at Jerusalem.

On the other hand, there are those who contend that the form of worship which they observe is of divine appointment ; that they occupy a peculiar position, and are favoured with exclusive privileges. And if, as all external evidence goes to prove, the temple in which

¹ John iv. 19—24.

they offer up their prayers be indeed situated on the holy hill of God; if it be the same in which the Lord has declared that he will dwell, and which should be called a “house of prayer,” unto all nations, who shall discredit their claim? “Salvation *is* of the Jews.” The means of grace *are* confided to the visible Church. But is it the *form* of godliness on which we rely? Is it a mere framework of ordinances which we regard with so much reverence, and preserve with so much jealous care? God forbid. We believe that to these externals there is attached a worship of spirit and of truth;—not by man’s wisdom, but by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God;—of God, the loving Father of our spirits, who in this, his own good way, is seeking the true worshippers from every nation under heaven, that he may gather them into one. We believe that “the desire of all nations has come, and has filled his *latter* house with glory’.”

Let it not be thought that in thus classing the Dissenter with the worshippers on Mount Gerizim, the Churchmen with those who worshipped at Jerusalem, I display an uncharitable or a presumptuous spirit. It is not my meaning to set a mark of reprobation on the one, while I fix the seal of divine favour on the other. I would rather set forth the palliating circumstances, amounting almost to a justification, under which the first perseveres in the religion of his fathers,—the faith of his childhood; admitting, to a certain extent, both the soundness of his principle and the reasonableness, the propriety of his feeling; while I warn the other of the peculiar danger of his position, bidding him remember that the sign of his profession, though in one sense “outward and

¹ Haggaï ii. 7.

visible," is still of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter only, "whose praise is not of men, but of God¹." Oh! that they might be brought together in one! Oh! that each might discern in this very parallel, and in the divine words with which it is introduced to our notice, the method and terms of reconciliation! Let the Dissenter admit that though "it is the Spirit that quickeneth," it has yet pleased the great Head of the Church to connect his Gospel with a visible ministration, appointed by himself;—let but the Churchman feel that "the letter killeth," and that the true worshippers whom the Father seeketh, are those who "worship in spirit and in truth:"—let both confess, that all sectarian distinctions, whether connected with Gerizim or Jerusalem, have been abolished, and that the "true worshippers" are one Church; and we may yet "take sweet counsel together, and walk in the house of God as friends²."

But between the confirmed Dissenter, and the decided Churchman, there are found a number of religious inquirers, perhaps a considerable proportion of what is called, strangely, yet not inappropriately, "the religious world," whom it is my more immediate purpose to address.

Multitudes of Christian people, so accounted by their neighbours, and far be it from me to give them a less charitable appellation, to whom the nature of a Church in the abstract is unknown, and Church communion, in a strict sense, disregarded, are in anxious search for "a place of worship," where they may meet with such an exhibition of doctrine, as may correspond with their notions of scriptural truth, and such a system of devotional exercise, as may fulfil their expectations of spiritual edification. In their own phrase, they are ready to go wherever

¹ Rom. ii. 29.

² Psalm lv. 14.

they can get most good; and although such a mode of speaking rarely indicates a proper temper for the inquiry, yet the principle itself must be confessed to be most just and reasonable. They *ought* to worship in whatever way, and in whatever place, the benefits of public worship can be best assured to them; and of this they must themselves be the judges, at least in the last resort. Let us pray that every one may acquit himself of the heavy responsibility hereby incurred.

That every man may judge for himself in religious matters, nay, that he *must* do so; in particular, that he both *may* and *must* choose for himself a house of prayer, is a position as true in one sense, as it is false and dangerous in another. That he must trust to his own judgment in every controverted question; that he must dictate, upon his own authority, the doctrine which he will receive, or direct after his own experience, the manner in which he will pray, can be maintained by those only who would make the end independent of the means: who would leave the disciple nothing to learn, and the seeker nothing to find.

To carry out such a scheme in practice is of course impossible, it is a contradiction in terms: but the attempt is constantly recommended, and frequently made. That the result upon the whole is a total failure; that errors the most extravagant, delusions the most pitiable, have been the general consequence of this self-guidance wherever it has been encouraged, and in proportion as it has obtained, must, I suppose, be evident to every one (whatever success each may attribute to his own inquiries), from the inconsistency of opinion, and the diversity of practice, on every point of religion, even the most essential, which it has everywhere produced.

Meanwhile, that humble, submissive, trustful disposition of mind, which is a main constituent, and an indispensable condition of faith, considered as a Christian grace, is sacrificed at the very outset. If to learn, and to pray, be the first objects for which we visit the house of God, the temper which we take with us, will be far removed from the pride of self-dependence, or the questionings of a jealous doubt.

On the other hand, it is not merely the *right*, but the *duty* of every man to render to his God a *reasonable service*¹, and to walk in the light of his own conscience. To reconcile this position with the preceding, may be thought difficult in speculation, but will never be *felt* so in practice. In fact, nothing is more common in life than to submit the understanding to authority at the instance of reason itself, and as the most reasonable manner of proceeding. In the pursuit of letters, in the study of arts, and even sciences, in the management of our health, and the disposition of our worldly estate, in short, on all occasions in which peculiar skill or experience is requisite, we either form no opinion of our own, or we postpone it, at least for a time, and to a given extent, to that of others, whom we have reason to believe better informed on the subject than ourselves. We confide in the wisdom of another, rather than in our own, and willingly submit to dictation and control: this, too, not in the expectation of meeting with an infallible director, but as the most prudent course upon the whole, notwithstanding some risk of failure. In the choice of our guide, we are influenced partly by the force of circumstances, partly by our free discretion; but having made our election, we submit ourselves with considerable

¹ Rom. xii. 1.

unreserve, to the rule under which we have placed ourselves, nothing being found so unfavourable to ultimate success, as a suspicious, tentative spirit, for ever passing judgment on the process, instead of waiting patiently for the result.

The position in which we stand to the Church, considered as a spiritual monitress, (if indeed we attach that character to any religious body,) is but faintly indicated in the above parallels. Yet the analogy is sufficient to suggest to the sincere inquirer, the frame of mind in which he must join in holy exercises with his fellow-worshippers, in the "House of Prayer," which he has adopted, in order to fulfil his own intentions, and justify his own choice. He must be prepared to receive, not to give direction; and if any part of his object be to discipline an evil and rebellious nature, he must not at once conclude that which is most agreeable, to be in every case most profitable. Having attached himself, on whatever grounds, to a particular religious institution, he must not bring its economy, point by point, to the standard of his immediate experience, but must take it as it were on trust, at least for awhile, and till he has given it a fair trial.

With regard to the Church, the mutual relation between a child and its parent, furnishes, I am well aware, a far more complete and instructive illustration, both of *her* office, and of *our* obligations¹. It is indeed as a mother, a holy spiritual mother, that the Church rears, instructs, and cherishes, the children committed to her care. The entire dependence of the infant nursling,

¹ This natural similitude, the truth of which consists rather in the identity than in the likeness | of the things compared, has been set forth with his usual skill by Mr. Newman,

in the first stages of his natural life, the confidingness and simplicity of his early feelings, the gradual expansion of his faculties, checked it may be, from time to time, to prevent a too early luxuriance, but never really discouraged, his understanding being progressively brought to bear upon those truths, which were at first received perhaps without examination, certainly without suspicion, first upon one, and then upon another, as it becomes able to cope with them, till at length the wisdom of the affectionate teacher is made manifest to the willing disciple, in all its fulness; he enters into her motives, he is admitted to her counsel, and that instruction which began in faith, is converted into perfect knowledge,—all of these states have their counterpart in the rearing and nurture of our souls. The whole process is, as it were, acted over again in a more excellent manner in our spiritual training, supposing it to be carried on, from first to last, in the maternal bosom of the Church. And here it is that the parallel so often fails us. The child does not *choose* his parents. He finds himself placed by Providence under their care and guidance. His feelings and conduct flow originally from sources placed beyond his control; and it is only by degrees that he becomes *conscious* either of his privileges or his duties. He enjoys the one, and practises the other, let us not say blindly, but for awhile without reflection. He is not led to question what he has no inclination to dispute,—happy indeed if he might arrive at rational conviction, without passing through the pains and the risks of doubt. Is there anything in this that implies an unworthy bondage of the intellect? Shall we say that the *child* is not treated from the first as a reasonable being, or that this trustful docility, this occasional and temporary submission

of the understanding to an authority grounded on love, is not a dictate of reason itself? Would that it were so with every *child of God*! Would that we all grew up together as one family, under the fostering care of one spiritual Mother, sensible of her love, docile to her precepts, and obedient to her commands!

Where however the grown-up man, already perhaps conversant with religious subjects, if not matured in religious knowledge, yet enrolled in no society of believers, belonging to no Christian brotherhood, living in no household of faith, is casting about for some one communion, out of so many, in which he may set up his rest,—(a case of extreme frequency in this country,)—we cannot expect to produce, by mere admonition, that teachable reciprocity of mind, which, on the former supposition, is our precious birthright, and portion by inheritance.

Yet surely a state of mind, in some degree resembling that of the child, must be attained, if we hope either for edification or comfort from any system of social worship, (for it is to this that our attention is at present directed). If we are driven to choose for ourselves a house of prayer, (a sad, but how often an inevitable necessity!) when we have once settled in our minds the grounds of our preference, so far as that is possible, while we remain *without*,—then, if we would really know by blessed experience, that we have chosen wisely, we must lay aside our sceptical spirit. We must enter the congregation “believing all things, hoping all things.” Or, if this be not possible, if such a preparation of feeling, though the condition of all eventual improvement be unattainable as a preliminary, yet must we assume a submissive attitude, and make the humbled will minister to the pious wish.

The preceding remarks are addressed to those who profess their readiness to join that form of worship, from which they can derive most benefit. And though, for my own part, I consider it most unfortunate that any person arrived at years of discretion should have such a question to decide, yet when this is the case, I am willing that it should be tried upon the principle which they have themselves adopted. I admit that the best devotional system is, that which confers most spiritual advantage, every man being judge in his own case. But if it is inferred from this, that a man is to go here and there, by way of experiment, and form his judgment from his own estimate of the effects produced in his own case, or even from a comparison of what he sees and hears, with his own preconceived opinions, then I maintain that the end is defeated by the very means that are taken to pursue it; that so distrustful a spirit can never be devout, so indocile a temper can never be instructed. That which is really submitted to his examination, and which alone, if he be sincere and reasonable, he will, in the first instance, seek to ascertain, is the *authority* of the different schemes. "Where can I put my *trust*?" is the only question which he need ask, in the sure belief that in this way he will eventually receive, not only most consolation, but most light.

I say that I am willing to try the question on the ground of personal benefit, as a matter of fact, because all truth is ultimately coincident in whatever direction it may be approached: but with respect to the parties by whom it is proposed, how much better would it be, if every one were to lay aside this continual self-reference, this egotism of piety, if piety it can be called, where self, not God, is the ultimate object, and inquire at once,

“What is the will of heaven? what is the mind of Christ in this matter? Whatever He has appointed, whatever most fully represents His desire, most truly fulfils His purpose, *must* be the best for me.”

Following up this thought in reference to the present subject, the Liturgy of the English Church, our first inquiry should be, by what body of believers is it used, and under what circumstances has it obtained? Does it carry with it any *peculiar* sanction, or is it merely a set of forms such as might be adopted by any other society? Who were its authors? Under what authority did they act? Have we any reason for believing that they had “the mind of the Spirit?” How did the family of Christ worship in earlier times? When did set forms first begin to be employed by Christians in their assemblies? Can this practice be referred to the primitive times? If so, can any of the forms now in use claim an apostolical origin?

To one really bred in the communion of the Church, all these questions have long ago received at least an implicit answer. The Liturgy speaks to him with authority; it has an antecedent claim to his respect, and he regards it with reverential feelings. He does not indeed look upon it as a divine and perfect work. He takes it on the whole as a human composition, but received by *him* under such circumstances as place it above the range of casual or ordinary criticism. If his opportunities lead him to examine the subject, he finds abundant reason for his prepossession; but he is not willingly disposed to submit its merit, either for approval or condemnation, to his private judgment. Whether it be too legal or too spiritual in its nature, too general or too exclusive in its application, whether too much or too little attention has

been paid to ceremonial worship and outward ritual, whether it bears the mark of unlicensed innovation or of a slavish submission to precedent, are points which he does not pretend to discuss as a disinterested party. He regards them as already decided, at least to a certain extent: and though he is far from believing improvement impossible, yet he limits this to partial modifications, and considers an entire change as out of the question. In a word, he would be a candid, but he cannot be an indifferent reasoner. Such is the inevitable result of his position: and if the view taken in this discourse be correct, it does not make him a worse, but a far better judge of the matter. It is in this way that all knowledge is really attained: all moral, all religious, all revealed knowledge. It is first believed, then examined, then explicitly known. It would not be difficult to extend the principle yet further, if the discussion belonged to this place. Even in the world of sensible experience, we arrive at knowledge through the gate of faith.

SERMON IV.
COMMON PRAYER.

PART II. ON THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ENGLISH
LITURGY.

2 TIMOTHY i. 13.

Hold fast the form of sound words.

FROM what has been said it will be concluded, that we cannot do justice to the Liturgy, without first considering the character and pretensions of the Church from which it emanates, not as a national institution, but as a witness of Christian truth. We must come to the question as churchmen, with our minds made up on a variety of other matters. Yet as it is the first characteristic that greets the unsettled religionist, when he turns his eyes towards the Church, placing it in direct contrast to every scheme of social worship in which it is not professedly adopted, as it creates a first impression, by which the entire system is not unfrequently judged, it may be useful to take a rapid view of its leading features, as an appendix to my former discourses, and an introduction to those which follow.

Let us suppose the case of an intelligent person, possessed of a general acquaintance with the subject, who should enter, for the first time, a church of the Establishment, during divine service. Or rather, let us make the case our own. Let us endeavour to recall those first emotions, which early habit has, in fact, anticipated, but

which we may reproduce in ourselves by an effort of the imagination; and having thus regained that susceptibility of feeling, without which the surest observation is uncertain, dim, and partial, let us follow out the train of thought suggested by the circumstances. The building itself, both externally and internally, has already struck us as peculiar. We can hardly mistake the character of the place: so marked is the distinction which it exhibits to all other edifices, even to those dedicated, under a different sanction, to the purposes of religion. Comparing it with every other Church that we have seen, of whatever age, or country, we recognise a general uniformity of plan, dating from the most ancient times, and communicating an air of solemnity, alike indescribable, and inimitable.

If we analyze our feelings, we shall be at no loss as to the cause of this impression. We still discern the operation of a common will, raised above the control, not only of individual men, but of a particular age. We perceive a sameness, which no diversity of circumstances, no variety of modification, has been able to disturb. It has evidently not resulted from the prevalence of fashion, because it has come down in independent lines. These we naturally seek to trace to a common origin; and although at length we lose sight of them, in the most remote antiquity, we have ascertained their convergence, and the point to which they seem to conduct us, is the centre of Christianity itself. Yet the agency of man must have been everywhere employed. Say that a *tacit* convention has existed from the beginning on this point. How did it arise? how has it been preserved? How has it maintained itself against the caprices of individuals, the opposing interests of parties

and nations, or the varying humour of the times? Will not the idea of a vast incorporation be suggested to the reflecting mind, pervaded by an invisible spirit, upheld by a superior power, revealed to the senses, and in this way represented to the understanding, as by many other symbols of permanence and communion, appreciable only by the initiate, so by the very form and general appearance of its sacred buildings, that stand as beacons and signals to the world without?

This idea, or the dim sentiment in which it is commonly enveloped, will be powerfully confirmed by the service itself. There is the same sort of solemnity, arising from the same source. The same character of steadfastness, union, and association, reigns throughout. We discern still clearer and more numerous indications of a wide spread and permanent order, variously modified, but still exhibiting a determinate identity, cognizable under every disguise, and pointing, as in the former case, but with more explicit evidence, to a common and a sacred source. Throughout the celebration we are struck with the absence of everything casual, arbitrary, and dependant. Of the individual worshippers, some appear serious and fervent, some cold and formal, some, perhaps, wholly indifferent and abstracted: but there is in the scene, as we see it acted before us, a holy presence, both visible, and otherwise sensible, which human piety could not have produced, and which human infirmity cannot destroy. No accident can vitiate the act of worship, though performed in common, and in the midst of many imperfections. Pure and holy in itself, it waits to be realized, and as it were asserted, by every individual for himself, and yet it is no solitary offering, no self-originating effusion. It tells of the faith, not merely of other men,

and other days, but is a fixed exponent of that faith which is now and always, here and everywhere, one, not as an abstract notion, but as a living principle. In the extemporaneous prayers of a sectarian ministry, we may have discerned much piety, much acquired or natural ability: we may have believed them animated in some cases, more or less, by the spirit of God. But here there is neither more nor less, neither failure nor special abundance. The clergyman, as a man, may exceed or fall short of a given standard of ministerial devotion. We are not the sport of such a contingency. In his official character, he represents an immutable ordinance, over which chance has no power. He stands to us, indeed, in many other relations, in which his personal piety, his learning, and his intelligence, have an ample field: but he has a certain range of duty, in which his acts are not his own, and possess a value, which he can neither enhance nor diminish.

This distinction is kept in view throughout, and imparts a propriety to many peculiarities in the Church service, which might else appear trivial, and perhaps objectionable. The peculiar vestment of the officiating clergyman thus acquires a meaning of some importance, and removed as far as possible from superstition. It is a silent rebuke to that homage so commonly paid to particular men, in respect of their special gifts, by which the person is more honoured than the office, the ambassador more regarded than his message. Properly considered, *this* is an idolatry, more insinuating in its nature, more mischievous in its tendency, and incomparably more ripe, and germinant in these times, than that which arises from the undue veneration of *a thing*. It was comparatively easy to pronounce the brazen serpent of

Moses, *Nehushtan*¹, and to break it to pieces. But when the people of Lycaonia would have paid divine honours to Paul and Barnabas, “they rent their clothes” in grief and horror. Here was a case of gross ignorance; but a similar feeling soon displayed itself in more specious forms. Thus the Corinthians are taxed with saying, “I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ.” How did these schisms arise, except from a confusion of the personal with the official character of those who ruled over them in the Lord? Hence the earnest question, “Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” This scandal, one of the earliest that arose in the Church, still continues one of the most frequent: and this misplaced homage is the more to be apprehended from the amiable feelings with which it is often linked, and out of which it appears to arise. Any correction to this dangerous tendency cannot but be desirable: and in the decent uniformity of ecclesiastical vestments, worn from age to age by the same functionaries, on the same sacred occasions, we are admonished as by an intelligible sign, that the ministers of Christ neither officiate “in their own name,” nor in their own strength. It may be remarked further, that the use of the surplice is generally accompanied by a sobriety of manner, in the performance of divine service, which to some may appear a defect of animation, though it is quite compatible with a deep and solemn earnestness, the more affecting, because it is subdued. This again is another working of the same principle. It marks the absence of personal pretension, the presence of an official importance. Contrast with this the characteristic manner of those by whom the surplice is rejected, or despised. It is thought

¹ 2 Kings xviii. 4.² Acts xiv. 14.³ 1 Cor. i. 12.

to indicate greater heartiness. That it is sincere and genuine, need not, and ought not, to be denied. But it is a *personal*, not an *official* fitness, which it symbolizes: and is an effort on the part of the minister to claim for himself, what the Church restrains to his function. What if a gross caricature has resulted in the Romish Church, from the misapplication of this principle, or rather from an extravagance in the practice, apart from, and in opposition to, the principle? Let us not argue from the abuse, against the use, lest we place a terrible weapon in the hands of our adversary. It is thus that the Bible was withholden from the laity, liberty from the subject, and education from the poor.

But to speak of the Liturgy itself. If the sacred edifices, in which we offer up "common prayer," remind us of a great society, mysteriously holden together, and variously manifesting its existence and power; if, in their general structure and appearance, they bear the Church's impress; the same character is much more distinctly visible in the forms themselves. We perceive the same impression left by the same seal. Assume that they emanate from such a society—admit that they are addressed to its members *as such*—and we discern at once both the consistency of the parts, and the meaning of the whole. On every other supposition they are unintelligible. They are offered up in the name of the congregation, considered not as individuals, every one differing from his neighbour in himself and in his circumstances, but as Christians exclusively, Christians by profession, and in fact, not in respect of their personal sincerity, but of their actual position. They take no cognizance of the worshipper in his private character; they contain no allusion to his relative merits or demerits. They speak

but one language, which every Christian churchman—every Christian *man*, not actually withdrawn from Church membership—may adopt with equal propriety, on the ground of a common humanity, and a common faith.

Thus all are addressed with the same exhortation, make the same confession, receive the same absolution, express the same hopes, the same fears, breathe the same charitable desires, avow the same holy assurance, are cheered with the same heavenly comfort. And this, which has appeared to so many a grave objection to the English Liturgy, if judged by its own showing, if the assembled worshippers be verily regarded as members of a universal Church, (however this fact is to be explained,) then I repeat, the method adopted in our Common Prayer, is precisely that by which the greatest extent of edification may be attained, the most serious inconveniences avoided. What language shall be put into the mouth of congregated members, which shall not convict some of insincerity, and many of presumption, which shall not say too much or too little, which shall be fitly applied to every state, and adequately expressive of every feeling, if it is to be uttered by every man in his individual, and not in his corporate capacity? As it is, we are addressed in our common character, first as men, secondly as Christians.

As men, we are contemplated as sinful, frail, erring; and again, stricken by conscience, self-condemned, seeking reconciliation with an offended God. We speak as those who are swayed by natural affection, stimulated by natural desires, subject to natural wants; as liable to various sorrows, to pain, disease, and death; as bound together by domestic ties, and social obligations.

As Christians, we believe, we hope, we rejoice: we

partake of sacraments, we are baptized, we communicate ; we are confirmed, edified, blessed ; we are children of God, members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of God.

In these two characters, both in one, and both in fact ; in a word, as members of that universal body, to which I have so often alluded, however we may as individuals have forgotten our privileges, broken our covenant, and fallen upon condemnation, we appear in the Liturgical services of the English Church.

I have shown on what *supposition* the Church service appears to me to acquire an intelligible, and consistent meaning throughout ; and in which alone, it can be fully adopted, by what is called “a mixed congregation,” that is to say, so far as man can judge, by any congregation whatever. It is clearly not intended for “Jerusalem that is above ;” and where, on this side the grave, shall the citizens of that heavenly city meet together, without a single alien to desecrate their assembly, or mar their perfect communion ? Not one against whom the gates of Paradise will be finally closed, or who is not now prepared to pass that holy threshold ?

I have also pointed out some circumstances, by which the corresponding *fact* may, as I think, be suggested to a thoughtful and unprejudiced mind, more, however, as a mode of introducing the subject, and in the hope of stimulating reflection, than as demonstrative evidence of its truth¹.

¹ For in what does the proof of an *idea* consist, except in its transference, so to speak, from one mind to another,—say rather, in its reproduction ? If there be any *words* by which this may be effected, by which the nascent germ which every man brings with him into the world, (being involved in that universal reason, which is his birth-dower and inalienable possession,) can be quickened into

To examine the Book of Common Prayer in detail, would, of course, far exceed my limits; but a few words are sufficient to set forth its general excellence. The work is, indeed, as admirable in its execution, as it is just in its intention and scope.

And first, is it not Scriptural?

With respect to the doctrine which it exhibits, we can only stand upon the defensive. In one or other of its formularies, almost every Article of the Christian faith is either declared or implied: every *important* article is impressively and affectingly asserted. It remains with the objector to point out which of its statements is at variance with the inspired record.

At all events, it is *ostensibly* Scriptural. We know how large a portion of the Roman Breviary, at the period of the Reformation, was occupied with the inventions of man. Can this be affirmed of the English Prayer Book? Has not every spurious, every modern, every unauthorized addition to the declarations of Scripture, and the known constitution of the Apostles, been considerably and studiously rejected?

But again, is it not Scriptural in tone, expression, and what we may call handling? With the exception

life and activity, we are not to seek them in dry propositions, and logical inductions. A simple statement of facts, viewed in the light which nothing but ideal truth can throw around them;—a kindly warmth of expression, such as naturally attends the convictions of a vivid insight: in a word, the genial exhibition, not so much of the grounds of our belief, as of the belief itself, is the only method by which an idea can be effectively

communicated. “One day telleth another, and one night certieth another.” Till this is effected, it is useless to put forth principles, and explain their operation; to classify phenomena, and trace their mutual connexion. We do but feed and trim the lamp, which is not yet lit. Our first task should be to blow it to a flame—to waken, if we can, the slumbering spirit of its fires.

of a few technical phrases, on which the church throughout the world has long ago set its seal, and which it has been found impossible to discard without risk to the important verities which they embody,—phrases retained with the wisest judgment, not merely to determine the limits of Christian truth, but to preserve and guard its substance, and which have never been abandoned without giving rise to a vague and latitudinarian belief, favourable it may be, to a nominal agreement, but destructive of real unity; with this exception, the great truths of revelation are transferred to our liturgical services, almost in the very words of the Bible. Where this is not possible, the subject matter passing out of the range of biblical phraseology, the character of the inspired text is still preserved. By an exquisite adaptation of Scripture materials, as unaffected and natural as it is refined and perfect; and affecting the thoughts even more than the words, we are kept, as it were, on holy ground, and speak throughout a sacred language. Even the method of our devotion is drawn from the same source. Our prayers and meditations are guided in their course, from day to day, and from week to week, by no casual or arbitrary directions. They follow in the track of the Gospel, and wait upon the Saviour, wherever he hath been, and whithersoever he will go.

But if the Book of Common Prayer be scriptural, can we doubt that it is spiritual?

We know that this has been denied; that it has been said to reflect the feelings of worldly, carnal men, living under the law, and that those who are spiritual, speak in a loftier strain. But with what reason? What emotion of heavenly birth, whether of penitence, or supplication, or thankfulness, whether of faith, or pious

hope, or love in its religious sense, or holy joy, or that humble confidence which alone becomes a Christian; what evangelical sentiment, I would ask, is not there appropriately and adequately set forth?

To some, indeed, it appears *too* spiritual, suited rather to a congregation of saints, as the term is now understood,—men visibly converted, and “come to themselves,” or as it is otherwise expressed, regenerate and sanctified, in a restricted sense of these terms, than to the mixed assemblies by whom it is actually employed,—men entangled with the world, and scantily imbued with any of the holy feelings which it expresses. This objection has been already noticed, and as the same sentiment constantly re-appears under various forms, we shall have repeated occasions to recur to it. It is one main object of these discourses to show in what its real force consists, and how it is misapplied. The congregations of baptized Christians, who meet together for prayer in our churches, *are* regenerate, if baptism be anything more than a form; *are* saints, in more than a ceremonial sense; *are* under a process of sanctification. Born of God, his seed *remaineth* in them, though it may not yet have germinated; though that “inner man” who “sinneth not,” and who “cannot sin,” may have for them no more than a potential existence, and the “law of their members” be still triumphant. “For if *we* say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us¹.” The new man is implanted in the old, but it does not immediately or entirely supersede it. “The infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated².” Hereupon a struggle ensues, carried on with various success, at different periods of life, under many forms, and with opposite results. In

¹ 1 John i. 8.

² Art. ix.

some it is but prepared: the good principle has not yet been called into action; the bad principle is in full operation. This is an extreme case. Some, on the other hand, “have fought a good fight;” they “have finished their course;” they “have kept the faith¹.” This is also an extreme case. In the great majority of instances, the contest has actually commenced, but is not yet concluded. Their state is variable and comparative. The feeblest combatants are conscious of some effort, they make some resistance. They pray to be “delivered from the body of this death².” They, on the other hand, who have fought best, still feel “a thorn in the flesh³.” They “count not themselves to have already attained, or to be already perfect⁴.”

Of those who meet together in the house of prayer, some are doubtless “in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity⁵.” Yet by the grace of God, the religious acts in which they join may prove the occasion of a happy change. If not, they must issue in their condemnation. But in this case they are “condemned already.” To very many, the forms of the Church, it must be confessed, convey a *reproof*, as wholesome as it is striking, and the more effectual, because its personal application is the work of the spirit; but it comes attended with a gracious encouragement. From the Liturgy, we learn what we are as members of Christ: what we are in ourselves, we may know from conscience, and we are reprovèd by the comparison. But because we are members of Christ, we are not delivered over unto death. “Greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world⁶.” “There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who

¹ 2 Tim. iv. 7.² Rom. vii. 24.³ 2 Cor. xii. 7.⁴ Phil. iii. 12, 13.⁵ Acts viii. 23.⁶ 1 John iv. 4.

walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit¹." Thus are we comforted and admonished. Yes! to many the forms of the Church convey a severe, to every one a necessary reproof, but a blessed encouragement to all.

Take the case of the most imperfect, the least impressed, of the worshippers who offer their public devotions through the medium of the established Liturgy. If he pray at all, if he be permitted to join with his brethren in any act of worship, what other language can he use, less spiritual than that which is provided for him in the English Church? Shall he be made to say, I do not repent, I am not contrite, I do not believe, I am not thankful for mercies received, I am not in charity with my neighbour? It is easy to assert, that in numberless instances this would be nearer the fact. Setting aside every other consideration, I affirm that such statements would belie the real feelings of the most careless, and do grievous violence to their conscience. As worshippers, they are not open to such imputations: their minds, for the time, and so long as the occasion lasts, are differently tuned, at least to a certain point. I grant the sad inconsistency which this indicates, and the serious culpability which it involves. But in what does this consist? Not in joining in a holy and spiritual worship, of which they are unworthy; viewed in relation to personal merit, or actual meetness, it transcends the best estate of those by whom it is most fully realized. Not in endeavouring to assume a position, which it is their misery not to assert more confidently. In this they do well. It is the *rest* of their conduct, everything *else* which they feel and do; which constitutes both their guilt and their folly. Of course I am not speaking of confirmed unbelievers, but of

¹ Rom. viii. 1.

Christians in fact, and in intention, for whom alone the services of the Church are designed. May we not hope that the habit of representing a character, from which their personal experience differs so widely, (no hypocrisy being implied in the act,) may, under God, be the means of preventing many from receding still further from the Christian standard, may fan the expiring flame of devotion in their hearts, and rescue it from total extinction?

Shall we say then, that the forms of the Church are *too* spiritual? We disclaim the notion involved in the phrase. They are *entirely* spiritual, but at the same time, they are *strictly practical*: and while they contain Hosannahs of praise in which a choir of hymning angels might not be ashamed to join, they are nevertheless expressly suited to the condition of fallen men, engaged in the warfare of life, frail yet strengthened, afflicted but comforted, tempted but not given over to despair. It is no imaginary picture which they present. They delineate a state of things in which every one may recognise his own position, and feel that what is said for all, may if he pleases, be said by him.

I have characterized the English Liturgy as Scriptural, spiritual, practical; let me ask finally, Is it not *comprehensive*? What part of "the counsel God," as revealed for the salvation of man, is not there to be found? Confession, prayer, intercession, thanksgiving, praise, the profitable word of Scripture, the divinely instituted sacraments of baptism, and Eucharistic communion,—all that the most pious and best informed Christian can look for, whether in his daily, or his occasional devotion, will be found in that treasure of religious services, the Common Prayer Book, arranged in the most beautiful order of succession, and expressed in such a solemn,

devotional, lucid, and harmonious style of composition, as can hardly be paralleled in any other writing not immediately divine. The causes of this excellence it would neither be unprofitable to trace, nor difficult to discover. They lie, indeed, above the range of those influences to which the merit of a merely human production is imputable, however holy its design, or admirable its execution. Neither the learning, the piety, nor the judgment of a Ridley, or a Cranmer, or any other individual of that illustrious band, nor all of them in council, could *alone* have sufficed to make the English Liturgy such as it is, and such as we have received it from their hands. We are indebted to these great and holy men for a judicious selection, for careful adaptation, for many admirable additions, conceived in so Catholic a spirit, as to render them indistinguishable from the elder portions of the work. Our obligations to the compilers of our Liturgy are, indeed, equally great, whether we take into consideration what they rejected, or what they retained; their wisdom, and their moral courage being equally evident, in their casting aside so much of the old material, and in their *not* casting aside more. To this praise they are entitled in their character of Reformers; nay, it may be conceded to them that they have left the impress of their mind on the whole collection, no less in that which they appropriated, than in that which they themselves produced: that they were not a whit behind the most eminent saints that had gone before them in that spirit of prayer to which these compositions owe their peculiar excellence; and, in the highest sense in which the words can be employed, they touched nothing which they did not adorn. Still, in its essential part, the English Ritual claims a different, and an elder origin: several portions, and those the most

solemn and important, date from the apostolic age: many more to that which immediately succeeded it, or, at all events, to a period long anterior to the corruptions of the papacy. A large proportion had been in use in the Church for many hundreds of years, antecedently to the usurpations of the Roman See: and for the rest, the traditions of other Apostolic Churches, furnished at least a precedent and an authority.

On the whole, our Liturgy is not to be regarded as the work of any single man, or set of men, either in their individual or collective capacities. It is the gift and contribution of the universal Church, and has become to us an accumulated patrimony, carefully husbanded, and handed down from age to age. Scriptural in doctrine, spiritual in sentiment, practical in its tendency, comprehensive in form; in all these respects, in form, in spirit, in operation, and in doctrine, essentially *Catholic*: and, therefore, without the least mixture of fanaticism; perfectly free from all the vanities of self-exalting schism, and mystical illumination; untainted by the pride of learning, and the yet more intolerable conceit of ignorance; it appears saved by miracle, say rather by the special care and providence of God, not, indeed, from all imperfection, (it is still a human work,) but from all the grosser errors and abominations of deceived and deceiving man.

Such is that "form of sound words," which the English Christian may hear in the divine service of his Church. Nor may I omit to add, what is perhaps not the least praise to which it is entitled, it is *fixed* and uniform; secured against the endless change of unsettled creeds, the captious objections of contending parties, the impatience and the fastidiousness of unsanctified and undevotional feelings.

To employ the mildest phrase, man is liable to error. But for this wholesome provision, this settled form of words, we must depend exclusively, in our public devotions, on the knowledge, the judgment, and the piety, of each individual minister. If these are wanting, (and how shall we guard against human frailty?) nay, wherever there exists a difference of opinion between the pastor and his flock, what is the result? The dissenting parties desert "the great congregation:" they withdraw themselves from the assemblies of public worship; each one gathers round himself a scattered few, of sentiments resembling his own, splitting that Church, which, like Jerusalem, is built as a city in itself, into a thousand petty sects, again to quarrel each one within its narrow pale, and disunite, and be for ever subdivided. But with a settled Liturgy, we know beforehand what we shall hear, and are prepared to bear our own part in the services. We have long made up our minds, that such is the truth of God, and such the wants of our souls. Our devotional feelings have early habituated themselves to this mould. Our heart recalls the long remembered words, and we "pray with the spirit, and with the understanding also¹."

Thus much of the first and most important part of our Church service, being the whole of that which can properly be called public worship. For the rest, if the preacher govern himself in his public teaching by the formularies which, happily, regulate and control his other ministrations, (and if he ever call to mind the solemn engagements under which he received his ordination, he cannot stray very far from their general sense,) we may hope that the service of the pulpit will harmonize with that of the desk, the font, and the altar. We may hope

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

and fairly expect to hear the same Gospel “preached” (in the restricted and popular sense of the term), which is, in fact, both proclaimed and expounded as truly in the Liturgy, as in the sermon, as effectively, and almost as fully, in the fixed offices of the Church, as in the occasional expositions of her ministers¹. At all events, no barrier has yet been suggested against the uncertainties of ministerial instruction, so effectual as that which is provided in the formularies of Common Prayer. True it is, that no pledge can be given, which will not sometimes be violated, no safeguard devised that will not sometimes be evaded; yet in what other way could even an approach to uniformity of doctrine have been thus far secured to us, in the absence or entire relaxation of a compulsory discipline, through so many periods of change, and so many fluctuations of public opinion? In what other way could a general agreement of sentiment, at least on essential points, among the authorized teachers of religion, (imperfect as it confessedly is,) have been so long, and on the whole, so well maintained, failing of which, the house of prayer must become a theatre of controversy, and Church communion a shadow and a mockery?

As it is, a pre-established order implying a general agreement, and precluding all incongruous intermixture, whether in the manner or the matter of the preacher’s admonitions, our religious exercises are troubled by no doubt, no anxious suspension of belief or acquiescence. Our consent has been gained long ago. We have given in our adhesion through our sponsors at our baptism, by our own act and deed at our confirmation. We renew it continually by our attendance at public worship, and most solemnly when we kneel down together at the Lord’s table.

¹ HOOKER. *Eccles. Pol.* v.—xxii. 9.

With this assurance, that we are all of one mind, to which in his ordination vows, the minister has set his seal, we can listen to the preacher with that respect which is due to the office, independently of that which may be due to the man. We can attend to his instructions, accept his consolations, and submit to his reproofs. Grant that some imperfection attaches to this part of the prophetic office. Grant that through the weakness of the agent, the work may be in some measure defective. May we not find in this very imperfection, an exercise for our charity, a trial of our faith, and a lesson to our pride?

At all events, "let those that are strong, consider the weak." What is to become of the simple, the ignorant, and the unwary, if they be taught to forsake their guide, to despise authority, and to trust to the broken reed of "private interpretation?" Is it not to be anticipated that they will desert altogether the healing pool of Bethesda, and hew out "broken cisterns" for themselves; that they will have "itching ears," and "be blown about by every wind of doctrine?" "Woe unto that man," saith our Saviour, "who causeth one of these little ones to offend¹."

¹ Eph. iv. 14.

² Matt. xxiii. 6.

SERMON V.

ON THE DUTIES OF THE CLERGY, IN REFERENCE TO
THE PRESENT TIMES.

JEREMIAH vi. 16, 17.

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls; but they said, We will not walk therein.

Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet: but they said, We will not hearken.

THE time is past, when the minister of holy things in the English Church should be restrained by any motives, however plausible, from speaking of that Church as his conscience dictates, without compromise, and without reserve. We have too generally neglected to enforce upon our flocks either their duties or their privileges as members by baptismal profession of a spiritual community, ordained by Christ himself, through the instrumentality of his apostles (however it may have been extended and perpetuated); a spiritual community not the less Catholic, not the less one with the great body of believers throughout the world, because it *appears* as an ecclesiastical establishment, set up with certain special provisions in a particular realm, and bearing a distinctive name. The very existence of such a society, (except as a lifeless notion, incapable of any practical application,) is rather taken for granted, than distinctly asserted. The fact that Christians were at the first, still are, and

ever must be, united by sacramental communion (however received) under one Head; that they form one vast incorporation, inheriting, in this capacity, the promise of the Spirit, and retaining as a most sacred trust, that “form of sound words” which was “once delivered to the saints¹,” is seldom brought prominently forward. In a word, Christ’s holy Church universal is seldom alluded to in our pastoral exhortations, except in the most general terms, timidly, and as it were doubtfully. Although this, or an equivalent term, repeatedly occurs in the Book of Common Prayer, although it forms an article of our Creed, and consequently passes the lips of ten times ten thousand worshippers, many times told, in their daily or weekly devotions, yet how few attach to the phrase, thus solemnly employed, any definite meaning! how few connect with it *any* doctrine, or *any* duty! If it be explained at all, how often is it explained away!

The important question on whom the ministerial office has devolved, and under what sanctions it is exercised, is still less frequently examined; and hence it is not surprising that the nature, necessity, and manifold advantages of Church membership, should be passed over in silence, or set forth in a vague and unimpressive manner. Controversy itself has long kept aloof from this topic, pregnant as it is with consequences, and once its perpetual theme: as if this discordant string, so often struck, but never harmonized, had been torn, in despair, from the mystic harp, and its jarring notes were henceforth to be heard no more. Vain thought! As if in removing a fundamental chord, we could preserve “the perfect diapason,” and so procure “an undisturbed song of pure concent².”

¹ Jude 3.

² Milton.

Of late, indeed, the discussion has been renewed in the high places of theological learning, (with what judgment is not here the question,) and has excited general attention, not unaccompanied with alarm. A subject of such grave importance, and in effect so novel, could hardly fail of producing exaggerated views,—indiscreet advocacy on the one side, and unmeasured opposition on the other. The immediate results of controversy are almost always painful. But with a few striking exceptions, and these of recent date, it has formed no part of pastoral instruction. It has received no general diffusion, except through the press. It has not been instilled quietly and practically, “here a little, and there a little,” in just proportion with other divine monitions, into the religious heart of the people. It has not been admitted into that “sweet counsel” which Christians “take together,” who “walk in the house of God as friends.” Thus a class of truths of high concernment, both directly and incidentally, to the spiritual interests of mankind, having been suffered to fall into abeyance, it is no wonder that the corresponding duties should be neglected and forgotten, or remembered only to be despised.

If this lamentable result were imputable solely to the established pastors of the Church, I should not have presumed to notice the deficiency, though confessedly involved in the same general censure. But the root of the evil lies deeper. It belongs to the character of the age in which we live. It is the effect of causes in universal operation, and as the lesson which they teach is equally applicable to the laity, as to their spiritual guides, it may not be without advantage to point them out.

And first, the real, though by no means exclusive

connexion, between the temporal interests of the clergy and the welfare of the national Church, has served, in the present state of public opinion, almost as a prohibition against the introduction of any ecclesiastical topic in a congregational address. The delicacy of feeling natural to highly-educated men, of comparatively retired habits, yet living, not in the stern seclusion of the cloister, but among their fellow-citizens, and consequently alive to social influences, has rendered the pastoral clergy, in general, reluctant to entertain any question, affecting however remotely, and by whatever unfair inference, their personal concerns, or those of their own order. They have felt it a painful and embarrassing task to appear as advocates in their own cause,—their own in popular estimation, but in reality the cause of the nation at large, and of every Christian man in particular. This reluctance, however,¹ must give way to the necessity of the case. We are trustees, be it remembered, of a great national interest, by which every layman is indirectly benefitted, and on which, in his own person, or as the representative of others, he may have a direct, though prospective claim. We are therefore bound to act, not for ourselves alone, nor for our official successors, but on behalf of every peasant's son, who may hereafter be called to the same ministry, and enjoy the like provision¹.

¹ “ That to every parish throughout the kingdom there is transplanted a germ of civilization: that in the remotest villages there is a nucleus, round which the capabilities of the place may chrySTALLIZE and brighten; a model sufficiently superior to excite, yet sufficiently near to encourage and facilitate, imitation; *this* unob-

trusive, continuous agency of a Protestant Church Establishment, *this* it is, which the patriot and the philanthropist, who would fain unite the love of peace with the faith in the progressive amelioration of mankind, cannot estimate at too high a price. ‘ It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx or

This temporal view of a question, too often considered in a merely temporal light, may suffice to explain the motives of those who have recently adopted a somewhat unusual line of preaching in this respect. But surely, the high and holy end for which the property of the Church is upholden, entitles it to be considered as a *sacred* trust, which the most spiritually-minded may regard with anxious care.

After all, the great spiritual bearings of this question, are but incidentally associated with the political establishment of the Church, or with the civil advantages which it enjoys in this kingdom. It is possible that the full developement of the former may have no tendency, as the world is at present constituted, either to exalt the persons, or to advance the fortunes of those by whom it is promoted. It is certain to expose them to much present obloquy, while the consideration which it confers upon the ministerial office, is of a kind to be appreciated only by very subdued and unworldly tempers. Properly

the sapphire. No mention shall be made of coral or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies.' The clergyman is with his parishioners, and among them; he is neither in the cloistered cell, nor in the wilderness, but a neighbour and family man, whose education and rank admit him to the mansion of the rich landholder, while his duties make him a frequent visiter of the farm-house and the cottage. He is, or may become, connected with the families of his parish, or its vicinity, by marriage. And among the instances of the blindness, or at least of the short-sightedness, which it is the nature of cupidity

to inflict, I know few more striking than the clamours of the farmers against church property. Whatever was not paid to the clergyman would inevitably, at the next lease, be paid to the landholder, while, as the case at present stands, *the revenues of the church are in some sort the reversionary property of every family that may have a member educated for the church, or a daughter that may marry a clergyman.* Instead of being fore-closed and immovable, it is, in fact, the only species of property that is essentially moving and circulative."—COLERIDGE'S *Church and State*, ch. viii.

defined, it may prove the surest safeguard against the subtle counterfeits which have so long engaged the passions, and abused the credulity of mankind; and this, not in the Church of Rome alone, but in every sect, communion, or party, that ever took the name of Christ.

This leads me to notice a second feeling, closely allied to that sensitiveness of which I have spoken, but of a higher character, and not far removed from Christian humility, by which many are deterred from “magnifying their office,” though with the most certain warrant of Scripture, lest they should seem to be exalting themselves. A sense of personal unworthiness will indeed be ever present with the conscientious minister, and the more he becomes acquainted with the nature of his office, the more oppressive will that sense be found. But while we admit, with profound self-abasement, the weakness of those instruments which the great Head of the Church is pleased to employ, we may not either deny our commission, or conceal our credentials. The more indeed we insist upon the divine authority by which our embassy is accompanied, the less we shall appear to think of the personal qualities by which it may accidentally be recommended. “Who am I,” said Moses unto God, “that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?” And he said, “Certainly I will be with thee¹!” “Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, *nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant*, but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man’s mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach

¹ Exodus iii. 11, 12. Compare Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

thee what thou shalt say¹." Who were we, that we should carry the Lord's message, unless our Master had promised to be "with us alway, even unto the end of the world?" But of this on a future occasion.

Many, again, are deterred from entering upon any controversial topic in their public teaching, either by the difficulty of carrying on a connected train of reasoning, in short and discontinuous discourses, and of rendering it intelligible to a mixed auditory, or by their dread of the angry and unchristian temper which such inquiries are too apt to excite. And certainly it would be most unwise to court opposition, or to promote unnecessary debate. Faith is not much given to argument. It does not willingly expose its treasures to the risk of a second contest, however confident of the result: it is engaged in higher exercises, and having won the truth, would now enjoy it. That willing, unsuspecting, child-like acceptance of God's counsel, which characterizes our best discipleship, is somewhat injured by the perpetual allegation of proof, as if the cause were yet to be tried, and every individual sat as judge. Still we may not purchase even so dear a blessing as peace, by the sacrifice of any essential truth, whether by open surrender, or tacit abandonment. Rather let us hope, that the "meekness and reverence," with which we "give a reason of the hope that is in us," may beget a like feeling in "every man that asketh us²." And although our argumentative process can have no pretence to regularity, though something must be taken for granted on each occasion, and the proof supplied on a future opportunity, though we must often retrace our steps, and gather up from time to time the thread that guides our path; yet by frequent repeti-

¹ Exodus iv. 10—12.

² 1 Peter iii. 15, marginal reading.

tion, and by diversified illustration, whatever is strange, and therefore obscure, in this, as in other religious questions, will be rendered familiar, and thus, by the blessing of God, cease to require discussion, or to breed dispute.

And although, in bringing our argument to bear upon the particular Church in which our own lot is cast, the subject becomes of necessity involved in secular considerations, by which, in the opinion of many, it is, as it were, *profaned*, so that it is no longer deemed fit to be handled on sacred occasions, or in connexion with religious truth; yet surely this very connexion at once invests it with a character as sacred as the occasion itself. As every national (not to say every portion of the visible) Church must have an outward order as well as an answering grace, it cannot be but that the former should have a temporal as well as spiritual bearing. If, however, we speak of the one, it is for the sake of the other. If we maintain the order, it is for the sake of the grace with which it is accompanied. If we allude to the temporal establishment of our venerable Church, it is with a reference always implied, generally expressed, to the spiritual objects which that establishment is intended to promote.

To the above motives may be added a spirit of charitable interpretation and self-distrust, happily not so uncommon as it once was, which shrinks from putting forward what may be esteemed exclusive and illiberal opinions. Of this temper it is impossible to speak too highly, so long as it is accompanied by a paramount love of the truth: of the truth for its own sake, and that of its divine Author. Otherwise it cannot fail to degenerate into lukewarmness and indifference, a latitudinarian faith, and an undecided practice. We pray to be delivered from “false doctrine, heresy, and schism.” If these be

enormous evils, it is because they are grievous sins. If sins, must they not be noted, deprecated, condemned? Have the two latter offences become obsolete, like the sin of witchcraft? Has "false doctrine" ceased to be upholden, and prosecuted in a separating spirit? Have we no "divisions" among us, such as the apostle reprobated at Rome and Corinth? Is there nothing that we can scripturally designate as heresy or schism? Not that we are permitted to judge others, either as bodies or as individuals: "He that judgeth us is the Lord¹." But we are bound to "declare the whole counsel of God²," "without respect of persons³;" to "judge, not according to appearance, but righteous judgment⁴."

Now it is evident that the feelings to which I have attributed the long silence of the clergy, on what are called Church questions, are in the strictest accordance with the spirit of the age. Delicacy of feeling, the absence of religious pretension, inwardness, and spirituality of mind, and general candour, are to a certain extent characteristic of the most cultivated class of the community, from which the English Protestant clergy are for the most part taken: and it cannot be denied that these qualities are in themselves as estimable as they are amiable. They are liable, however, to be supplanted by counterfeits, against which we cannot be too much on our guard. The love of ease, the want of moral courage, hesitation, or, at least, indistinctness of belief, and general deficiency in zeal, will present the same outward appearance, and claim to be considered as charitable judgment, religious humility, and the desire of peace. In every case it will be necessary to keep the moral balance even: to prevent even our better ten-

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 4. ² Acts xx. 27. ³ James ii. 1. ⁴ John vii. 24.

dencies from becoming extreme, and to observe the signs of the times with a view to their useful application.

A crisis in the affairs of the Church is now at hand, or rather has already arrived. It has not come upon us without warning, and has not found us altogether unprepared. Accordingly, a somewhat different manner of feeling, speaking, and acting in this matter is becoming general, both among the clergy and laity. On the former there lies an especial obligation to declare the *whole* counsel of God, in this as in every other particular. The Lord has "set them to be watchmen upon the walls of Jerusalem," and he admonishes them by indications of no doubtful character, to be very zealous in their office: and yet, perhaps, it is the lay members of our Apostolical Church to whom this divine call is more particularly addressed. Let the trumpet of the Gospel ministry be heard ever so clearly, and woe be to the watchmen if it remain silent, or "give an uncertain sound¹," yet may the people, as a body, refuse to hearken.

That an indisposition to submit to any authority, however beneficially exercised, has been for a long time widely manifested, both in this country and elsewhere, is but too evident. With the causes that have produced this temper, I am not now concerned, or with its justification, should that be possible, in a worldly point of view. Without doubt, it is attended with extenuating circumstances; and although in the first outbreak, replete with mischief, it may ultimately be overruled for good. It *may*, or it may *not*. A perpetual and indefinite advance of improvement in the moral constitution of the world, is, indeed, generally anticipated by men of cheerful piety, with what slender support from Scripture needs not now

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 8.

be shown. Certainly it is liable to long and fearful interruptions. What if a restless, self-willed desire of change, emancipated from the wholesome checks, by which in the vigorous maturity of nations it is universally controlled, indicate the fretfulness of declining years,—the beginning of that train of sorrows, by which the long and apparently hopeless old age of states has hitherto been visited,—rather than the impatience of a second youth? Or, to give our thoughts a wider range, what if the secular scheme of God's providence were drawing to an universal and final close? Whatever view may be taken of the prophetic Scriptures, and I am far from disposed to fix the chronology of the divine predictions, (is it for man to compute how many revolutions "the turning wheels of vicissitude"¹ may have yet to perform?)—yet surely it betrays an unsubdued, and somewhat of a carnal spirit, to prolong this present scene indefinitely, and as it were, immortalize the *world*, whether in millennial dreams, or in a lengthened chain of causes and events, too hopefully calculated.

Be this as it may, the temper above described, when applied to religion, and what I must venture to call Church-government, becomes awfully characteristic of those "perilous times" which are to take place in the last day². From this we may at least infer that it is extremely displeasing to God. Yet without implicating any particular party, we cannot but perceive, that it is at present, fully as rife in church as it is in state. And this is no more than might be expected. For what is the voice of the Christian watchman, in every critical conjuncture? Is it not in the language of the prophet Jeremiah, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for

¹ Lord Bacon. ² Jude 18. 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 1. 2 Peter ii. 1, &c.

the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." The foundations of religion are all laid in the past: it is old truth which we have to proclaim; new error against which we have to warn. And with respect to our own religious establishments, it is the ancient paths from which the people have wandered, and into which we have to guide their returning steps. In particular, the rights and powers of Christian ministers, whether temporal or spiritual, are essentially prescriptive. Even if created, and not merely sanctioned by human law, confirming, and adapting to its own purpose, an order of things which it found in effective operation, still the legislative enactments to which we refer, are for the most part of very early date, and belong to "the days of old."

Now the present time is distinguished beyond any that have preceded it, not merely by the neglect, but by the dislike of antiquity. All the world appears bent upon "laying again the foundation" of all things. Customary usage, far from being a recommendation, is taken as argument either of folly, or of fraud. To plead length of prescription in favour of an existing practice, or an established right, is to confess that no better reason can be urged in its defence. A remote origin affords, it is argued, a presumption, not in favour of a given institution, but against it: because length of years are likely to have occasioned a change of circumstances, and what may have been right and fitting long ago, can hardly fail of being obsolete and unsuitable now.

Thus, whatever is ancient, is presumed to be antiquated, more especially in an enlightened age, preceded by centuries of comparative darkness, when the human mind, freeing itself from the restraints by which it was

formerly fettered, has sprung forward with a sudden and unexampled bound. That such has been for some time the tone of public feeling, is testified, not only in the course of political events, or in the conduct of a political party, but in the literature, habits, and manners of the people at large. It may be regarded as a moving principle in the formation of popular opinion; a principle sometimes nearly dormant, and overborne by a dead weight of custom; sometimes nicely balanced by counter influences, and tending to progressive improvement; sometimes acquiring a rapid and uncontrollable developement, and menacing total destruction.

That this way of thinking, like every other that obtains widely and forcibly among mankind, has a side of truth, and when properly limited, has been productive of good; nay, that at certain periods it has been usefully called forth into unusual energy in the service of religion, need not be denied: but that, as at present exhibited, it is mischievous, extravagant, and unreasonable, is felt by all sober minded persons, and scarcely requires proof.

And first, it greatly over estimates, not merely the superiority of the present over past ages, in substantial wisdom, and that knowledge, of whatever kind, upon which it is founded, but even the difference in kind, existing between our times and those of our ancestors. It is not asserted that there has been no advance in useful knowledge, or that no real variation in the actual state of things has taken place, but only that the *degree* is vastly overrated.

In regard to the first, the supposed superiority of the present age, the mistake arises in various ways. A part of knowledge, perhaps the least important, is put for the

whole. No balance is struck between what is gained in one department, and what is lost in another. The worthiness of the end pursued is not considered in determining the value of the means. Thus science, the doctrine of means, usurps the place of philosophy, the doctrine of ultimate ends. The economy of wealth is taken as the measure of national welfare; legislation passes for jurisprudence. So again, the study of nature may have flourished, the study of mind may have drooped, the arts of life may have advanced, domestic wisdom may have lost ground, education may have been diffused, scholastic learning may have declined. All our gains are counted, but our losses are not set against them. And again, personal comfort, convenience, or luxury, mental or bodily; is openly proposed, not only as the best, but as the only object of intellectual pursuit: whereas formerly, the search of truth was supposed to bring its own recompense. Thus a lower end is substituted for a higher, and by over-stating the claims of our fellow-creatures, once too much neglected in these studies, we forget the more sublime relation between the human spirit and the God who gave it. The effect which has resulted to the religion of the day, is very striking, and far from unmingled good. It is the recoil of monastic piety in matters of devotion, as of monastic philosophy in the pursuit of intellect.

In regard to the second head, the variation so much insisted on in the external state of things, the more deeply we are read in past history, the more we become aware that the same things re-appear in different ages, under new names and altered forms. We find that we have been deceived by appearances, till we are ready to exclaim with the wise man, "Is there anything of which

it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us¹."

More especially is this shown in the history of religion, in which we find a perpetual recurrence of the same description of events, so that the accounts of one age appear to anticipate the next, as if "the thing which hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun²." The same errors in doctrine, exploded in one century, are brought forward in the next, as something wholly new; again confuted, and again produced, perhaps at the expiration of a thousand years: now condemned as a heresy, now discussed as a speculation; and little said on either side, that had not been as well, or better said, by the men of old time, as by the best of their successors.

In a word, the contempt of antiquity, so commonly manifested, places the age in a false position, more especially in ecclesiastical affairs. A single generation is drawn up in array against all that have preceded it, and has to make good its pretensions, not only with no assistance from the great and good men that "sleep in the Lord," but against their united forces. Covenant is broken with the mighty dead; and they, whose ever-living wisdom, whether it speak to us in books, or yet more impressively in the institutions which they have contributed to form, to sanction, to improve, are set aside to make room for the new, capricious, dogmatical, untried authorities of the day; for partial interests, sectarian prejudice, and temporary fashion; for the despotic sway, and idolatrous worship of the present: as if there were neither voice nor vision in the oracular past.

¹ Eccles. i. 10.

² Eccles. i. 9.

The issue of such a procedure cannot be doubtful. Baseless theories, driven like the clouds by every gust of fancy, and soon dissolving into air,—embodied vapours, floating in the thin element of thought, and neither fixable in any settled shape, nor applicable to any practical purpose,—take the place of a defined and authorized creed: while, for the divine economy left by the apostles in their master's kingdom, how large a number of his professed disciples would substitute an illusive phantom, or a cold negation!—the spirit of enthusiasm, or the dead frame-work of human law! Not content with tearing off the decent vest of primitive custom, as non-essential and cumbrous, there are those who would dismember the body itself, as if in this way the living soul might be detected, and laid bare. Suppose it done. Alas! the subtle essence is fled, and its place knows it no more.

Religion, both in its vital powers and essential forms, let me add, in much of its outward dress, the beauties of its holiness, as they are seen by mortal eye, is an heirloom from our fathers. Its visible presence is everywhere the emblem of stability: it exists under the condition of permanence, and thus its very accidents are less unstable than anything else in this shifting world; as if their natural transiency were arrested in that heavenly service, like the garments of the Israelites, that “waxed not old” during the forty years that they wandered in the desert. Thus the present becomes linked to the past, and both to the future, by a chain of venerable and inspiring associations, equally reasonable and affecting; a mystic unity, imaged to the senses in the traditionary ordinances of the Church which we now see, and realized to the feelings by blessed memories, by perpetual consolations, and by glorious hopes.

¹ Deut. xxix. 5.

As the remarks brought together in this discourse may perhaps appear miscellaneous in their character, and accidental in their arrangement, a brief recapitulation may be advisable.

It has been my object to show why a subject of immense importance in all its bearing to the Christian cause, a subject that has repeatedly engaged the attention and exhausted the powers of the ablest men, should still to the majority of hearers, if not of readers, appear new in its facts, or at least strange in its conclusions. I have attempted to show why, on the one hand, it has so long been excluded from the course of pastoral teaching, pursued in the English Church, either as an acknowledged basis of truth, or a doctrine itself requiring to be explained, established, and enforced; and, on the other hand, why, when at last it is brought forward prominently and earnestly, it is received by a large class of religionists with coldness, and sometimes rejected with disdain. In the course of the inquiry, I have been led to speak of certain characteristic features of the present times;—general tendencies against which, at least in their misapplication and excess, both clergy and laity have need to be warned. Of these, the neglect of antiquity, and consequent contempt for authority, are, and must be, as I have endeavoured to prove, most hostile to the interests of religion. If I have opened an avenue of thought, by which the more direct consideration of the subject itself may be suitably approached, my purpose is fully attained.

SERMON VI.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, CATHOLIC, PARTICULAR, POLITICAL.

EPHESIANS v. 22.

This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.

THAT the present age is marked by a general forgetfulness of ancient truths, will scarcely be disputed. The very prescription which long guarded them from irreverent inquiry, has eventually exposed them to neglect. What argument has so often proved, and experience so fully tried, it has appeared superfluous to set forth and maintain. Hence it has come to pass, that time-hallowed principles of thought and action, when again distinctly asserted, have been received as startling and suspicious novelties, more particularly in regard to the establishment of religion. Of course this statement must be understood with the requisite limitations. All have not "forsaken the guide of their youth," their Mother Church. There is still "a remnant" of her flock, not inconsiderable in numbers, and daily increasing both in distinctness of views, and in unity of purpose; men of fervid and enlightened piety, deeply and unreservedly attached to her communion, not as political partisans, nor even as constitutional patriots, (though this be a strong ground of adherence to the oldest, as well as the most sacred of our national institutions;) still less as religionists determined to her services by mere preference, "by a show of wisdom

in will-worship¹," by accident, by convenience, or by taste, but as sincere communicants in the full sense of the term. The National Church, indeed, with characteristic tenderness, keeps these distinctions in a great measure out of sight, regarding all within her pale with an eye of charitable interpretation: but the times are peculiar, and it has become necessary to review her troops with a more jealous scrutiny. There are not wanting those who would support the *Establishment*, while they strike a deadly blow at the *Church*. Even among her own members, there are too many who neither act as her friends, nor believe as her faithful sons. Few churchmen are fully acquainted with the nature of their engagements. Some are "halting between two opinions," and willing to remain neutral. Some are inquiring, but unable to arrive at conviction: and not a few entertain a deeper faith than they are ready to avow. They have not explored the depth of their own feelings, or examined the force of their own words, and are not aware how little there is in the opinions which they profess, to satisfy their own believing heart.

Is it enough to regard the National Church as a religious denomination, characterized, it may be, by purity of doctrine, by a decent order, and by an edifying ritual, but positively distinguished only by its political relations—in short, as a favoured sect? In order to satisfy this inquiry, let us consider what would remain of the Church, if those relations were annulled? I reply, that as a spiritual association it would suffer no *necessary* change. It would still remain an integral portion of the Church at large, separated from other portions by the same landmarks, distinguished from its own sectaries by the same characteristics. It would remain what it now is, a true

¹ Col. ii. 23.

and undivided branch of the "one Catholic and Apostolic Church," spoken of in the Nicene Creed, its derivation being an historical fact, and not determined by mere sameness of doctrine, or similarity of discipline, whether real or supposed.

Such is the true definition of our national communion, prior to and independent of secular considerations. The value of this distinction will appear presently. For the present, let it be taken as the Church's own manifesto. Whether her pretensions be well or ill founded is, of course, open to dispute; and she has never declined exhibiting her credentials. It is this distinction, indeed, or, to speak more correctly, the fact on which it is grounded, which supplies the only terms of union by which her members are kept together as a religious body. They are not associated as Trinitarians, as Pædobaptists, or as Episcopalians, still less as the followers of any particular doctor, or founder, but simply as Churchmen.

The case admits but of one alternative. Either the so-called Church of England is indeed *the* Church in England, historically considered, or it is a mere emanation from the State, flourishing or declining under the varying influences of secular policy, and liable to utter extinction from the same cause.

Accordingly, there are two, and but two, distinct opinions on this head. There are those who regard the entire constitution of the Church, with all her rights and powers, as the creature of human law. Now what the law can create, the law can destroy. Thus the same act of the legislature, by which the so-called union of Church and State should be repealed, would, on this supposition, make void the ordinations of the clergy, desecrate all consecrated buildings, and leave the existing members of

the Establishment, without bishop, priest, or deacon, without sacraments officially administered, without lawfully appointed places of worship, without incorporation; unconnected individuals, united indeed by a common faith, but with no standard of orthodoxy; left to club together as they might, and as they would, for public worship, and outward communion. Freed from all previous obligation, let loose from every species of conformity, they would have to begin anew: to elect a new ministry, to invest them with new powers, to create a new rule, and to bind themselves by mutual consent to its observance. This opinion demands a separate consideration. At present it will be sufficient to remark, that it is held by two very different descriptions of persons. By the one it is defended on the ground that the State, in a Christian nation, being ostensibly composed of Christians, is the true representative of the Church, and the origin of all law, whether ecclesiastical or civil. By another party, however, the same supposed fact, that the Church of England is a creature of the State, is urged as a damning proof that it is no Church, in any spiritual sense: and if we were to admit their premiss, it would be difficult to deny their conclusion.

The opposite opinion recognises, in the union of Church and State, two independent parties, co-operating for their mutual support, and for the benefit of the people at large; parties, each of which has existed, and might exist again, apart from the other, though such a separation in a Christian land is allowed to be a marked anomaly, and a most serious inconvenience. It asserts that the Church received its essential form, as a visible incorporation, at its first origin, from divine authority; that it is charged with certain functions, and invested with certain

rights, which no human power could give, or can take away: and that although in particular portions it may be depressed and impeded by political causes, it cannot perish either entirely, or in parts, except through its own apostasy, and by the judgment of Almighty God. Finally, it denies the existence of any authority among its own members, whether lay or clerical, whether represented in a civil or ecclesiastical assembly, whether in the present state of things, or in any future emergency, to form a constitution for themselves; but requires them under all circumstances to "hold fast that which they have received." I am not speaking of local or temporary adaptation; there is, of course, a certain range of discretionary regulation left open to the wisdom of each particular Church, that is to say, of its lawful rulers for the time being. I refer to the leading features of that divine economy, which it carries with it down the stream of time, as its fixed and unalterable character: any attempt on the part of individuals, however numerous, to remodel this economy, being regarded as the signal of heresy, and the forerunner of schism.

Between these two opinions, there is, in reality, no middle line, though comparatively few may be disposed to pursue either into all its legitimate conclusions. Thus far, however, they *must* be followed by every one who considers the interest of religion as affected, either favourably or otherwise, by visible establishments. In the one case, we must hold that the body of Christians, forming what is called the Church of England, would cease to exist, as a distinct society, on the separation of the Church from the State. In the other case, we are encouraged to believe, that no outward contingency can deprive them of that Church communion which they at

present enjoy; no human enactment release them from the Church conformity to which they are at present bound. The pure and Apostolic Church, of which they profess themselves members, may, indeed, lose her spiritual charter by her own defection; but so long as she is true to herself, her essential ministrations must remain unchanged, the privileges of her faithful communicants undiminished.

It is my object in these Sermons to defend and illustrate the latter of these views, not doubting that the former is entertained by many individuals of sincere piety, as well as distinguished talents, but believing it nevertheless to be inconsistent with the attributes assigned to the Church in Holy Writ, and fatal to the Scriptural character of our own communion.

On the present occasion, I propose to say a few words in explanation of the somewhat technical phraseology, which this inquiry, when pursued with any reference to abstract principles, renders indispensable.

The word Church, it will be observed, carries with it what may be called a compound meaning; that is to say, it denotes several distinct relations of the same community, and different communities as they are separately distinguished by each. It may be taken, first, as synonymous with the great society of believers throughout the world; secondly, as an integral and vital part of that society, occupying a particular district, province, or realm, and exhibiting in certain externals (though by no means in all) a peculiar order; thirdly, as a national establishment, allied to the civil power, and discharging certain functions strictly congruous with its peculiar offices, but not purely religious, nor exclusively ecclesiastical. In a word, the Church is either Catholic, Particular, or

Political. The Catholic body is divided into particular communities, locally restricted, and otherwise defined; and in Christian countries, the latter may, and naturally will, be taken into the service of the state. In this case, the three characters are united in the same institution. Thus we say that the Church of England is Catholic, because, as we trust, it is a part of the holy Church universal; particular, because it is limited to a given realm; and political, because it is in alliance with the civil power. The first and last of these relations is contingent to the second; but the first only is indispensable. The union of Church and State might be dissolved, and a true Church (as I hope to prove) remain; but to be severed from the Catholic body, is spiritual death. A particular Church *may* be political, but it *must* be Catholic. A national Church is both the one and the other: one with the Church Catholic, united with the State; recognising in the former the issues of its spiritual life, imparting to the latter that religious sanction without which even the heathen did not dare to legislate.

The Catholic Church then, as it is established in particular countries, acquires a political relation by its alliance with the state. Supposing the Church perfectly pure, and the government perfectly Christian, a complete and indissoluble union would of course take place. I do not say that the one would be lost in the other, and the united body perform the same functions in common. Each would occupy its own province without interfering with that of its ally; but the two would act harmoniously together, with conjoint authority; the laws and regulations of each receiving the full sanction of both. As it is, the so-called union is, as I have termed it, an alliance merely more or less strict according to the varying

temper of the parties, an alliance not always of the most cordial description; the terms of agreement being by no means generally understood, or universally observed. And here a wide field of discussion arises, on which it is not my intention to enter.

The position above laid down, may be thus otherwise stated. The universal Church is represented in particular societies, and these assume an additional character from their relations to the state. The reverse order does not necessarily obtain. The national Church might be particular merely. It might be heretical and schismatic. It needs not essentially be Christian at all. The state might ally itself with any, or with every form of religious belief, with Judaism, with Deism, or even with professed Infidelity; and still hope to supply the imperfections of coercive government, by a different description of influence; by education, for instance, by the sway of intellect, or by popular amusements, which last, under what may be called the Pagan Church, formed an important part of the state religion. There are not wanting theorists who would gladly try the experiment in our own times; who would derive the moral force of government from any source rather than from the Christian religion,—“the truth, as it is in Jesus.”

Again, it is at least conceivable, that a *particular* Church (whether national or independent) may not be truly, or even ostensibly, Catholic. A number of professed Christians may associate themselves under a particular rule, alleging that their doctrine and discipline are Scriptural, and calling themselves a Church. Such a society may be orthodox, but it cannot without an abuse of terms be called Catholic. It cannot consistently adopt any of the early creeds To “believe in the holy

Catholic Church," is something more than to recognise all the *other* doctrines of the Christian faith. It is itself a distinct article, additional to the rest, and implies the necessity of an outward and visible union with the Church at large. If not, if it only require a mystical connexion founded on sameness of belief, it is but a "vain repetition" in a formulary purposely reduced to the narrowest compass, and intended as a test of necessary faith, at once declarative and distinctive. Thus understood, indeed, the clause declares nothing that could by possibility be denied. It is a mere truism, and therefore the term Catholic is rarely employed by those who are constrained to put upon it so lax and evasive an interpretation.

In the Nicene Creed, the epithet apostolic is added. Now, in one sense, every form of Christian profession is derived from the apostles; and to believe in the Catholic and Apostolic Church, is nothing more than to believe in Christianity; whereupon the objection just alleged, recurs with increased force. In addition to the other essential doctrines of revealed truth, this article asserts the existence of a Church; not Christianity in the abstract, but Christianity visibly embodied: and whereas several distinct associations were even then in existence, each putting forward the same general pretensions, the Church is said to be but one,—an universal society. Lastly, to decide between the irreconcilable claims of contending parties. The one Catholic Church is further described as Apostolic; "built," as St. Paul expresses it, "on the foundation of the prophets and apostles¹."

Thus we see Catholicity is expressly connected with Apostolicity, each being required as a test of the other;

¹ Eph. ii. 20.

the latter characteristic being superadded as more plainly distinctive, more easy to be brought in evidence, than that which it is required to determine. As if it were said,—You profess to be Catholic; prove that you are Apostolic, and your title is thus far established. Failing of this, the first requisite is wanting. On the whole, it can scarcely be doubted that the words of the creeds imply nothing else than a visible, or, as I have before expressed it, an historical derivation from the original Church of the apostles; and to this, it is evident, many (so-called) particular Churches can lay no claim¹.

Do we, then, slight the testimony afforded by correspondence of doctrine and discipline with that of the Church of Christ, as depicted in Scripture? God forbid. We contend that this internal excellence pre-supposes, in the ordinary tenour of Divine Providence, an external tradition, each supplying its own evidence, and strengthening that of the other. Scriptural doctrine and discipline are indeed the very blessings to which we would establish our claim. It is for the sake of so precious a possession, that we refer, with some degree of anxiety, to the channel through which we have received it believing that it affords, first, a *presumption* in our favour, a previous likelihood, that the “good thing²” thus conveyed to us, is the same that was originally “committed” to the saints; and secondly, a correlative proof, from which every other

¹ It will be understood, that wherever, in these discussions, religious bodies are spoken of in their corporate capacity, no reference is intended to the individuals of which they are composed. That the inference is not inevitable,—in other words, that individuals may, after all, be differently af-

ected in respect of their Christian privileges, than from their outward position we are entitled to infer, is rendered probable by many considerations. It will be sufficient, at present, to have made this protest in explanation of the author's own intentions and feelings.

² 2 Tim.

argument receives additional force. Conscious of the uncertainty which attaches to mere opinion, we rejoice that we have not to depend *exclusively* on the results of a comparison conducted by ourselves; but may trust in some measure to the course of the stream. Would we drink of the waters of health at a distance from the fountain, we shall not be satisfied with observing them as they ripple at our feet, however pleasant to the eye, or refreshing to the taste, we may find them; but shall trace the rill through which they run, and deem it a fresh security if it lead us to their native spring.

From these principles it may be concluded, that in treating of our national Church, we may waive all consideration of the political relations in which it is involved (these being merely contingent), and regard it as a spiritual society, to be tried by the standard of Holy Writ. It is in this light that I shall now consider its "Scriptural character," and accordingly shall proceed to examine, on Scriptural grounds, the important relation in which it stands to the Church at large as a Christian community, independently of its connexion with the state. Now the Church, in its Catholic definition, including, as we have seen, the particular communities into which it is divided, and, in fact, consisting of them as constituent parts, whatever is true of the whole essentially, must be true of every several portion. Thus, if the Anglican Church be, as we believe, a true and undivided branch of Christ's holy Church universal; if, as we humbly trust, it be truly derived from the parent stock, and have not cut itself off by any irretrievable schism, or disqualified itself by any mortal heresy, (in which case its vital powers lie dormant, or are wholly extinct); then, whatever is affirmed in Scripture, or may be gathered by *plain* inference from

the sacred text, whatever, in fact, has by universal consent been so collected respecting the Church of Christ in general, will be true of our own particular offset, and not only may, but, under certain restrictions, *must* be applied to it. The converse does not, of course, hold good; and hence many special ordinances may be binding on the members of our own communion, from which our fellow Christians in other lands are exempt. They have a particular, though not a universal obligation, and flow by immediate derivation from the authority of Christ, though not of his own appointment, or that of his apostles.

But what if the branch be dead, and the wild vine suspend from it its poisonous grapes'? What if the foreign intruder have usurped its place', wreathing it with a foliage not its own, and investing it with a seeming life'?" Or if not dead, may it not be diseased? and will not the fruitage, in this case, be proportionally injured? The tree may be good, and yet the shoot carry with it its own particular defect. How can we certainly attribute to the one, the virtuous qualities which we know to belong to the other?

Not without inquiry: not *certainly* till we have examined the fruits,—for “by their fruits shall ye know them’.” Yet it is something to see the *visible* connexion of our own branch with the true vine. It creates, at least, as I have above stated, a presumption in favour of the produce. Men do not *expect* to “gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles’;” but the vine-branch excites a reasonable expectation, though it may eventually disappoint it. It demands a trial, and in the absence of

¹ Is. v. 2.² 2 Thess. ii. 4.³ Rev. iii. 1.⁴ Matt. vii. 16.⁵ Matt. vii. 16.

unfavourable symptoms it justifies a hopeful reliance. We are not bound to regard it, at the outset, with suspicion, though in due time, and according to our opportunities, we shall have to “prove all things, and hold fast that” only “which is good¹.” More especially is this true, if our fathers have sat beneath its shade, and plucked of its inviting clusters, and found them wholesome. Even this will not acquit us of the duty of personal investigation, but surely it justifies a child-like confidence in the beginning of our inquiry,—a hopeful anticipation of good.

I have said, that whatever is true of the whole Church *generally*, must be true of every several part. This, as we shall see presently, is a very important proposition. It affords the ground upon which alone the pretensions of particular Churches, to the possession of Catholic powers, can be defended; and it is therefore necessary that it should be clearly understood, and properly restricted. Now there are certain properties assigned to the Church universally, or as a whole, which are *not* necessarily true of every constituent part. Indefectibility, or final perseverance, is one of these. As a whole, the Church shall never perish; “the gates of hell shall never prevail against it²,” but in parts we know that it is even too liable to corruption, to decay, and death. Other properties belong to the Church *collectively*, or as represented by *all* its portions. In this sense, the Church is infallible,—“a pillar and ground of the truth.” Its united voice, whenever it can be ascertained, admits *of no appeal*. Hence the authority of the canonical Scriptures, in which the Catholic determination of the Church, in all things necessary to salvation, are clearly and safely

¹ 1 Thess. v. 21.

² Matt. xvi. 18.

conveyed to us. But particular Churches *may err*, as the most famous have “erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith¹.”

But in addition to those characters which can only be predicated of the Church as a whole, or as collectively represented, there are others of immense importance, which belong to it inherently and absolutely. Of this kind is that blessed assurance of our Saviour, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them²,” with the functions and powers grounded on this fact. The communion of the body and blood of Christ, as connected with the solemn institution of the Lord’s Supper, is another of these diffusive privileges; and there are many others. These being true of the Church *essentially*, must be true of every Church particularly. The ocean, however divided into seas, or subdivided into bays or creeks, is still the same water. Whatever can be said of it in general, must hold good in the particular portions. If we speak of its briny taste, we allude to a quality which we can recognise as we stand upon the shore. It belongs to every separate wave, and is not a mere attribute of the entire collection. In like manner the Church Catholic, however locally distinguished, is everywhere the same in essence, equally Catholic, equally the Church of Christ. The characters impressed upon it by its Divine Author, are diffused over its entire surface. It cannot lose them without ceasing to be itself, any more than the atmosphere could part with its elasticity, or become impermeable to light, and still remain what it is. These qualities, though attributed in Holy Writ to the Church in general, we may impute, with the most unreserved confidence, to our own branch.

¹ Art. XIX.

² Matt xviii. 20.

If it be a Church at all, it is a portion of that which Christ ordained, and which the apostles founded.

The above characters are merely instanced by way of illustration; their exact nature must be considered hereafter. It is most important, however, to remark, that, be they what they may, the promises on which they rest are made to the Church, and are not satisfied by their application to individuals. "On this rock," said our Saviour, "I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it¹." It is not enough to infer from this, that there will always be some Christians "holding the mystery of faith in a good conscience²." We must believe that "the great congregation," however depressed, however corrupt in parts, however torn and divided, nay, though "the whole head be sick, and the whole heart faint³," and everything to human appearance threaten speedy dissolution, will still be divinely preserved; and as it has been, so it will continue to be, a living power, through union with the Head, and communion among the members, even "the body of Christ⁴." And if it be asked what are our grounds for this assertion, I reply, that *it is so said*. The assembly of the faithful,—the saints in their collective capacity,—the faith as embodied in a positive institution,—in a word, the CHURCH "is built upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And with the inspiring thoughts which this confidence engenders, I close the present discourse.

¹ Matt. xvi. 18

² Is. i. 5.

³ 1 Tim. iii. 9.

⁴ 1 Cor. xii. 27.

SERMON VII.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, OR THE CHURCH AS DELINEATED BY THE SAVIOUR.

MATTHEW xiii. 11.

To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God.

WE have seen that the Church of God may be contemplated either as a great whole, in which sense it is generally spoken of in Scripture, or with a reference to the particular districts in which it is set up: and that, under certain restrictions, we are perfectly justified in applying to the latter, the characters assigned in Holy Writ to the former. In other words, we have a right to expect from every true Church¹, whatever we know to be true of the Church Catholic.

It is difficult to state this truth in a logical form, without the semblance of metaphysical refinement, from its extreme simplicity. Properly understood it is self-

¹ "The fourth character of the Christian Church, and a necessary consequence of the first and third, is its catholicity, i. e., universality. It is neither Anglican, Gallican, nor Roman, neither Latin nor Greek. Even the Catholic and Apostolic Church of England is a less safe expression than the Churches of Christ in England: though the Catholic Church in England, or (what would be still better) the Catholic Church under Christ throughout Great Britain

and Ireland, is justifiable and appropriate: for through the presence of its only head and sovereign, entire in each and one in all, the Church universal is spiritually perfect in every true Church, and of course in any number of such Churches, which, from circumstance of place, or the community of country or of language, we have occasion to speak of collectively."
—S. T. COLERIDGE'S *Church and State*, p. 160. Second Edition.

evident,—an identical proposition; and yet it is fraught with consequences so little followed out in the present age, even by those to whom they might appear most acceptable, that they are for the most part heard with surprise, if not rejected with incredulous scorn. All that is said in Holy Writ respecting the Church at large, is of course, accepted as divine truth, but it is rarely studied with attention, because it is not applied to the Church which now is, and in which we live.

Comparatively few look to the visible Church collectively, for that direction, which as we know from Scripture, it was intended to give: still fewer turn their eyes to the particular branch of it established in their own land. And this not because it is unscriptural or corrupt, but simply, because the Church of Scripture is supposed to be something different in kind from anything that can be realized in the world. The Scriptural account is held to be true of the Church in *general*, but of no Church in *particular*. And this is the reason why the passages in question, though exceedingly emphatic and impressive, are passed over by most readers with an impatient carelessness, instead of being earnestly studied.

This mode of evading the force of certain texts, the obvious meaning of which does not fall in with the current opinions of the day, assumes various modifications. By many, the Church of Christ, as founded by the Apostles, is represented as something invisible, spiritual, and mystic; as indeed it is: and therefore in no sense visible, embodied, or real, which is a false inference, or a gratuitous assumption. There is, indeed, “one spirit,” but there is also “one body.” If it were the Lord’s purpose to purify unto himself a peculiar people, does it follow of necessity that those who differed from other men *inwardly*,

should not also differ from them *outwardly*; or that those who resembled each other in heart and mind, should not be systematically, and by divine appointment, united in act and deed? Is not the contrary supposition, to say the least, more probable? I repeat it; to affirm that the Church cannot be a visible, because it is a spiritual institution, is a false inference: to say that it is not, and was not *intended to be* outwardly embodied, is a gratuitous assumption.

Shall it be said that every good Christian belongs to the Church Catholic, in and of himself, as an insulated individual, and has no occasion to look to others to make good his *connexion* with that mystical assembly? This, at all events, requires proof. It must be established on evidence, and cannot be taken for granted as an axiom. Surely there are certain *spiritual* relations both to the head of the Church, and to all its real members, in which every *good* Christian *must* be placed; and if so, we shall have to ascertain what these relations are, and how they are to be acquired. Have they nothing to correspond to them in the *visible* Church? It may, indeed, be affirmed that every member of the Church, who holds the head, exists in a direct relation to the Saviour, and through him to the Christian body generally. True, and hence arises a real connexion between the members themselves: but nothing has appeared to prove, or to render it probable, that this connexion must not be outwardly demonstrated, or that it does not constitute a condition, under which the vitality of the whole, and of every part is preserved. Faith, personal faith, coming of grace, without doubt, is the root of the matter; but what if faith itself be *perfected* by outward communion, in all its forms? What if in turn it seek and require this particular

manifestation, displaying its divine energy *appropriately*, by a trustful recognition of the Saviour's presence, in all the pledges of his love, and in all the ministrations of his spirit? Else is the Church, as described in Scripture, no other than a collective term for believers in the aggregate—a heap of sand. But if so, why is it so often spoken of as a living body, ostensibly, as well as spiritually, united, “a spectacle to *men*, as well as angels¹.” Why is it said to act, to suffer, to determine? to be intrusted with powers, to exercise authority, to be swayed by a common will? Granting, that every passage in Scripture, in which the Church is mentioned, taken singly, might be interpreted, without admitting its corporate existence, what is their force when taken together? Why is it still the Church—the *eclete assembly*?

Again, why should salvation, faith, growth in Christ, and that attainment of his stature, for which we are encouraged to strive, be spoken of in connexion with the saints collectively, rather than individually²? What need of Baptism, or the Lord's Supper? Assuming these to be no more than edifying emblems, or external badges, why require an outward communion, if unaccompanied with inward blessing? If the benefits, of which it appears to be the channel, have already been received in all their fulness? If they are neither communicated through, or strengthened by, the visible act?

If the union of believers in one body, united to one head, is repeatedly, variously, and earnestly set forth by the inspired writers, as an essential part of the divine economy, and always as “a great mystery,” shall we see nothing more in the doctrine, thus solemnly revealed, than a theoretical notion, true and sublime as an object of

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 9.

² Eph. iv. 11, 12, 16. Acts ii. 47.

contemplation, but of no practical concern, or at best, as a privilege following the Christian profession, as it were of its own accord, and neither an instrument of blessing, nor an occasion of duty? Is it charity, brotherly kindness, and Christian intercourse, which is hereby recommended? These graces are, indeed, fostered by Church communion, and essential to it. But will this explanation sustain the weight of such expressions as those of our Lord, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, *that they may be one, as we are.*" "I in them, and Thou in me, that they all may be *made perfect in one*¹." Is this divine, and awfully mysterious unity, through which, as it appears, the great redemptive process is carried out, in the regenerate, renewed, and sanctified spirit, satisfied by the exercise of mutual affection on the ground of a common faith? Does it mean nothing else? Does it require nothing more?

At all events, *some* outward communion among believers will be allowed to be necessary, or at the very least highly expedient; and the diversity of opinion which prevails as to its nature, the laws by which it is to be regulated, and the benefits of which it is productive, renders it very needful that we study the subject with close attention, and in a teachable spirit.

The Church, be it remembered, is neither a term of man's invention, nor an institution of man's appointment. It is continually alluded to, and twice expressly named in our Saviour's own teaching. When the Apostle Peter, in answer to his question, "Whom say ye that I am?" had replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus took occasion to make a direct announcement

¹ John xvii. 11—23.

of his intentions, the importance of which may be estimated from the manner in which they are declared: "Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven¹." The solemn emphasis of these words requires no comment, scarcely admits it. On another occasion, our Saviour settles the constitution of the assembly thus founded, as a court of appeal in certain cases, investing it with the necessary authority². If the offending brother remain obdurate, after all private methods of reconciliation have been tried, "tell it," thus the Saviour directs the disciples, "to the Church, but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican. Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."

From the former of these passages, we learn that "the Church" is an interchangeable term with "the Kingdom of Heaven;" in both it is mentioned by *name*. Now, whether we retain the technical designation, or adopt, with a modern translator³, the more general, but not more accurate rendering, *congregation*, the force of these passages is precisely the same. It is still the Lord's congregation, distinctly ordained, solemnly chartered, fully empowered. It is still a positive institution, founded on

¹ Matt. xvi. 15—19.² Matt. xviii. 15—20.³ Campbell.

a rock, (whether the ministry of the Apostles, or the faith which they confessed,) and destined to last for ever; neither to be affected by time, nor to be overpowered by evil. Above all, it is still the kingdom of heaven. It is not, however, the name for which we are contending, (though to tamper with established phraseology, as if its true meaning *must* be different from that which it has traditionally borne, *must* have been distorted by usage, instead of fixed by it, be as contrary to sound criticism, as it is to a religious temper.) It is not the name for which we contend, but the thing signified. And hence, it is not solely, or principally, on the strength of the above quotation, that we apply to the Church, as subsequently established by the Apostles, the edifying descriptions which our Lord has given of his people, considered as a visible body, under other appellations.

As the kingdom of heaven, its nature and destination is variously illustrated. It is described as a field¹, in which good seed and tares are sown together; the former by the rightful cultivator, the latter by his enemy. Both, he declares, are to grow up promiscuously, and are not to be separated "till the harvest." Now the field, in the first instance, is the world; but the mingled crop is the Church, the kingdom (whether reign or realm) of heavenly *grace upon earth*. The good seed is sown first, then the tares, and the sower is Christ. If the distinction were simply between good and bad men, Christians and Heathens, the opposite order must have been observed. The good seed must have been sown among the tares.

It is further likened to a marriage-chamber², provided with unsparing bounty, and at length, after much difficulty, and earnest solicitation,—a sort of violence³,—furnished

¹ Matt. xiii. 24.

² Matt. xxii. 1—14.

³ Matt. xi. 12.

with guests. All are invited, and made acquainted with the nature of the entertainment; all are admitted into the festive apartment; but all do not partake of the supper. On the arrival of the king, there is found one unsuitably prepared. He has not on the wedding-garment. Accordingly, "when the king came to see his guests," he is banished from the joyous company, and "cast into outward darkness." The gloom and despondency without, as contrasted with the light and festivity within, presenting a most lively image of the opposite conditions of good and bad men, real and nominal Christians, once living under the same privileges, but now for ever divided; the separation taking place at the coming of the Lord in judgment, and not before.

The same doctrine is obviously conveyed in the parable of the net, that gathered fish of every kind, both bad and good¹, which are not divided, or sorted, till the vessel comes on shore. Such a net is the kingdom of heaven, a dispensation, collecting together men of opposite descriptions, whose character cannot finally be determined till the end of the world.

In all these passages, to which many more might be added², whatever may be the primary, or leading truth, which they are intended to communicate, one common idea lies at its root; one fact is everywhere pre-supposed: the existence, namely, of a body of men, under the Gospel dispensation, called forth by our Lord himself, through the ministry of his Apostles, from the world at large, and visibly brought together under one denomination: a mixed assembly, wheat and tares, good and bad, wedding guests, some in a wedding garment, others without it; wise and foolish virgins, the first with oil in their lamps, the

¹ Matt. xiii. 47.

² Matt. xxv, 1—32.

second (through their own neglect) with none; servants, some diligent and watchful, others unfaithful and careless: all enjoying the same outward advantages, but not all equally improving them; all waiting, but with what different expectations, for a day of righteous retribution, when “the Lord shall appear” to “separate them, as the shepherd divideth his sheep from his goats,” and to “deal with them according to their works.” It is not said that the Lord’s people are to be mingled confusedly with the world, and are not to form a distinct body. Far from it. They are inclosed in a net,—they are contained in a chamber,—they are protected by a fold,—they occupy one house,—they labour in one vineyard: but the assembly itself, though it be called by the Saviour’s name, and consecrated to his service, though its object be “holiness to the Lord,” and its constitution ostensibly require it, is actually of a mixed and imperfect character. It becomes so, in spite of its original intention, through the malice of the devil, acting, under the permission of God, upon the weakness and perversity of man. This is plain from the Sacred Text. The net is cast for good fish, but the draught is of good and bad; the chamber is prepared for wedding guests, but an intruder enters; good seed is sown by the sower, but an enemy soweth tares. Hence, with respect to the motive of its heavenly Author, and the original intention of the scheme itself, it bears those glorious titles, to which, alas! it has at present no more than a prospective claim. It is “the Church of the first-born,” whose names “are written in heaven’.” Its members are “saints,”—they “have escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust’.” Such is the Lord’s assembly in respect of its purpose; and when

¹ Heb. xii. 23.

² 2 Peter i. 4.

“every man’s work shall have been tried,” such it will *appear*. Meanwhile it is compassed with infirmity.

There is first a calling, and then a choosing: a preparatory election of grace; an eventual selection of meetness: grace preventing, meetness following. Both are requisite. “The grace of God freely appearing,” requires that correspondency on the part of the recipients; according to which judgment will ensue. And the *gifts and calling of God herein displayed, are without repentance*¹.

Many other features of this divine dispensation, are delineated in our Saviour’s teaching. With respect to its feeble beginnings and gradual increase, it is compared to a grain of mustard-seed, which eventually becomes the largest of all herbs: and with regard to its effects, the secret energy with which it operates upon the minds of men, it is the leaven which a woman hid in the three measures of meal, “till the whole was leavened.” That the gradual expansion of the kingdom of God in the world at large, the filling of the earth with the knowledge of the Lord, is here designated, and not *merely* the sanctifying influence of the Gospel upon individuals, in whom the hidden germ of grace has been received, is probable, not only from the terms of the parable itself, but from the connexion in which it stands.

¹ Compare Romans xi. 29, where the election of Israel is the subject matter, with Matthew xvi. 18. In both cases the reference is to an outward economy. Doubtless the same doctrine is applicable, *by parity of reasoning*, to individuals; *though this makes a wide difference as to the intention of the apostle*. But the latter

belongs to the counsel Triune Majesty, “*secret to us*.” (Art. XVII.) The former of these states is exhibited in the Church militant, the latter in the Church triumphant: the one is called, the other chosen; the latter being the same body as the former, in a different stage of maturity, the same corn, ripened, and winnowed.

That the assembly of which our Lord speaks, and to which the term Church was affixed by the apostles themselves, in a determinate, and what we should call a technical sense, however constituted, is to be regarded as a visible institution, is strikingly shown in those passages, where our Saviour compares the disciples to “a city set on a hill,” that cannot be hid,—and to a lighted lamp so placed, as to enlighten all that are in the house. They are further described as “the salt of the earth,”—still in their collective capacity. And here we observe that it is not the efficacy of the Gospel itself, but the appropriate functions of its professors as a body, which are here shadowed forth. “Ye are the light of the world,”—“Ye are the salt of the earth’.” And again, the light may be obscured, the salt may lose its savour. The Church may imperfectly and unworthily discharge its high office as a witness of the truth, and an instrument of spiritual illumination. It may lose its saltiness, and so administer but a feeble corrective to the corruption and depravity of mankind. And wherever this has been the case, it has been “trodden under foot of men.” Blessed be God! as a whole, the Church will be divinely preserved from such a consummation!

It would be difficult, indeed, to mention any considerable portion of our Saviour’s teaching, in which the notion of a Church does not more or less plainly appear. In many passages it is distinctly expressed, in many more it is evidently implied. It is in strict harmony with every part; and it affords, not only the most natural, but the only consistent explanation of the whole. This is especially manifest in those parables, in which the call of the Gentiles is represented. In every case it is

’ Matt. v. 13.

the privileges of the Gospel, as an outward dispensation, to which they are said to be admitted. They are to be placed in a state of salvation; they are to enter into covenant with God the Father; they are to be engrafted into the Jewish vine, and to supply the place of the natural branches. In a word, whatever the Jews *were*, they are now to *become*. The Jews had “much advantage every way.” This “advantage” was now to be transferred to the Gentiles: wonderfully heightened, indeed, and enlarged, but still *of the same kind* as before,—the old vine, with new branches;—a visible estate, into which they should be introduced openly through the medium of a call, and which might subsequently be improved, or abused, retained, or forfeited.

To the parable of the marriage-supper we have already had occasion to allude. In that of the prodigal son, “the house of my father,” as it is beautifully imaged, in the language of the returning penitent, is the Church of God; the elder brother, is the Jewish portion of it, including all the former dispensations. “Son, thou art ever with me,” are the words of God himself to his ancient people. To this happy mansion the younger son had once belonged: he had stood originally on the same footing with his favoured brother. But after “not many days” he had left his home, and wasted his substance. In the earlier part of the divine economy, the Gentiles had separated from the more faithful portion of the Church; they had quitted the faith, and lost the hope of the patriarchs, of Abel, and of Enoch, of Noah, of Melchizedek, and of Job. They were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. To this elect and privileged society they were now to be rejoined, notwithstanding the displeasure of the existing members. Had it been “the

spirits of just men made perfect," to which they were admitted, and not *in the first instance* to an earthly and most imperfect representation of that blessed company, such jealous and unworthy feelings could never have entered into the description. "There is *joy* among the angels of heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

The same interpretation applies to the parable of the labourers hired to work in the vineyard. The vineyard is the Church, the successive portions of its members are admitted at different times; some early in the morning, some at the third hour, some at the sixth, and ninth. These periods correspond generally to the earlier dispensation recorded in the Old Testament: in each case, a call from an uncovenanted and Gentile state is indicated. It is the Church as contrasted with the world, not Christianity as different from Judaism, which is implied. At the eleventh hour there are still others standing idle in the market-place,—Gentiles still strangers to the covenant of promise. These are now hired, and the labours of the day brought to a close. The even came, when the labourers were to receive their wages. That kingdom of heaven, to which the people of God had looked forward with so much anxiety, was now established, and they waited to receive their reward. Was this apportioned either to the length of their service, or to the diligence which they severally manifested, or to any other personal qualification? Far from it. They received "every man a penny." They received just what was promised, and because it was promised, and they received it without distinction. Now we have reason to believe, that those who shall finally enter into the joy of their Lord, will not be dealt with thus indiscriminately. It would appear that, in the great day of judgment, much

will be given to some, less to others; not irrespectively, but according to a given scale: and the same rule is applied still more distinctively to final punishment'. But the hope of the Gospel is the same to all. Now the Jews expected that they should receive more than the Gentile converts. They even murmured against the good man of the house, because they were placed on an equality with themselves. If this be referred to a visible economy of covenanted blessings established here on earth, it is plain and intelligible; the Jews expected to enjoy, at the very least, a visible pre-eminence in the Messiah's kingdom, and murmur that it was withheld from them: but how can this be applied to the day of judgment, when it shall be "rendered to every man according to his deeds"?' Shall we hear any murmurings then?

The above quotations are taken almost exclusively from the Gospel of St. Matthew; and as the separate passages occur in close succession, the interpretation of each is illustrated and confirmed by that of the remainder. That which by St. Matthew is more frequently called the kingdom of heaven, is entitled the kingdom of God by St. Mark and St. Luke; and with this slight variety in expression, the two latter evangelists exhibit precisely the same doctrine, and, for the most part, in nearly the same words.

In the Gospel of St. John, the language of our Saviour, in speaking of his people, assumes a still loftier tone. In the three former evangelists, the Church is characterized as a particular description of men separated from the rest of the world for a divine purpose. Its outwardness, its visible constitution, its progressive

¹ Luke xii. 47, 48.

² Psalm lxii. 12. Rom. ii. 6.

growth, its appropriate functions, its liability in parts, to defection and decay, are impressively set forth. At the same time we recognise the same Church in another point of view, as inward, spiritual, invisible, a heavenly reality, coincident, but only to a certain extent, with its earthly and imperfect representative. It is already revealed to us as *a society*, invested with power and authority. Its members are initiated on an express condition, and by a peculiar rite. Another solemn observance marks their participation in the benefits of which it is the dispenser. It is placed under fixed regulations, and an established government, of which I shall speak hereafter. All these ordinances are of our Saviour's own enactment. But it is in the record of "the beloved disciple," and principally in that last discourse which he only has preserved, that the mysterious connexion of our Saviour himself to his Church, though indicated on many other occasions, is fully disclosed. From that consolatory revelation, we learn that the company of believers upon earth are truly one, through their union with the Eternal Word, incarnate in Christ Jesus. He is the vine, they are the branches. As God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, so is Christ in his true Church,—and this divine relationship is formed and kept up through the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father at the instance of the Son, from both proceeding; the three persons of this holy Trinity, constituting one adorable Godhead.

The above descriptions of the kingdom of heaven,—the Church, as delineated by our Lord,—are of course prophetic. They announce a new dispensation, immediately about to take place, but not yet in force; as our Saviour himself declared, "the hour cometh, and now is¹."

¹ John iv. 23.

Hereupon a question arises, how were these announcements fulfilled? How did the reality correspond to the prophetic picture? Surely we may expect that some light will be thrown upon our Saviour's words from the actual state of things to which they refer. Now it is evident that if this heavenly kingdom was ever realized in any visible society, the account which we have given of its nature and character is fully borne out by the facts as they eventually took place. The net was cast, and it *did* gather of every kind. The seed was sown, but it soon became manifest that an enemy had also sown tares. The supper was prepared, but, alas! how many of the guests were without the appropriate garment! The actual Church, even in the apostles' times, exhibited no doubtful traces of that imperfection; the same intermixture of good and bad in its constituents, which has led so many to refuse that honoured name to any existing institution; either, on the one hand, separating themselves from the Church, as it appears in their own land, in the hope of framing for themselves a Church of their own, a Christian society composed exclusively of true believers, a Church, as they would represent it, in the Scriptural sense of the term, and on which alone the divine blessing may be expected to rest; or, on the other hand, denying the applicability of the Scriptural account to any visible communion: the former, in their view of the case, being exclusively referable to the company of saints "whose names are written in heaven¹;" and the latter mere voluntary associations, formed for religious purposes, with or without the sanction of national law. Both parties equally affirm that the Church which we see is not that of which our Saviour speaks, and for the

¹ Luke x. 20.

same reason, because it contains a mixture of good and bad men, of real and professing believers, of consistent and of merely nominal Christians: and to both we return the same answer, that such is precisely the sort of Church which the representations of Scripture lead us to anticipate¹.

If the kingdom of heaven, the reign of God, visibly

¹ The names and titles given to the Church are of two sorts: for there are some that are verified of it in respect of the whole considered generally, and as it comprehendeth all those that concur in the same intire profession of heavenly verities, and outward meanes of salvation, though they be of very divers, different, and contrary condition: so it is named, *a great house, wherein there are vessels of honour and dishonour, in which there are that walke according to the rule of Christianity, and worthy of God; and others that walke inordinately.* It is named *a field, in which is wheate mingled with tares.* It is *a floore, in which there is wheate and chaffe.* It is *a company of virgins attending the comming of the bridegroom, whereof some are wise, having oyle in their lampes, others foolish, having none.* It is *a net cast into the sea, that gathereth into it good fishes and bad.* Other names and titles there are, which are not verified of the Church considered generally in all her parts, but onely in respect of some parts, and those the best and principall; so it is named *the spouse of Christ, and the wife of the Lambe, a royall Priesthood, an holy nation, and a peculiar people, the Love of Christ, all faire, undefiled, and without*

spot, the onely Dove, an orchard inclosed, a well sealed up, a fountaine of living water, a Paradise with all precious, delectable, and desireable fruit, and that nothing may be added to the honour of it. It is the *mysticall body of Christ, which he doth animate, formalize, and quicken with his owne spirit: of this body the wicked are not members, though they bee members of the body of the Church generally considered.* It is therefore a vaine dispute betweene them that say, they are members of the mysticall body of Christ, though not living members, and them that say they are parts, but not members: for they are neither parts nor members of the mysticall body of Christ, though they be both in respect of the body of the Church considered generally. And it is false that Bellarmine affirmeth, that we require inward qualities to make a man to be of the Church, thereby making it unknown who are that Church, to whose authoritie and direction the Lord commandeth us to submit ourselves. For we doe not require inward qualities in a man, before hee can be at all of the Church; but before hee can bee fully, and of the mysticall body of Christ.—FIELD. *On the Church*, book i. pp. 17, 18.

marked and circumscribed in the world (for in no other sense can the original phrase be thus rendered), comprehend within its sacred fold, as defined by the Lord himself, two descriptions of persons, contrasted in character, and agreeing only in a common profession, shall *we* hope to construct a Church that shall include the one, and exclude the other? Can we find in Scripture any permission to make the attempt *by schism*, any encouragement to hope for success within the Church itself?

The necessity of Church discipline, the propriety of ecclesiastical censures, the lawfulness of excommunication itself, are not here disputed. As the first Advent of Christ affords a type and prophecy of the second, the predictions which were partly fulfilled in the one, waiting for their full and final accomplishment in the other, so the kingdom of God on earth presents a faint and preparatory outline of the same divine economy, as it will hereafter be made perfect in heaven: and doubtless it is right and fit, nay, and our bounden duty, so far to anticipate those judgments, which the King shall make, when he shall come in to see his guests, as may be consistent with the known laws of the same heavenly Potentate. For in a lower sense, that desired visit has been already paid, and every one who refused to put on the garment of righteousness, excluded from the banquet of grace. The sentence is already past, and so far as it can be certainly known, "his servants" are bound to carry it into execution; and if the privileges of the visible Church be at once an image and preparatory state of the marriage supper of the Lamb, as it will be celebrated in his Father's kingdom, to be shut out from that favoured company, justly, and with the warrant of him in whose name it is assembled, may exhibit a warning symbol of

that "outer darkness, where there is weeping, and gnashing of teeth." But when all is done, the separation can never be complete. Gross offenders may be thus visited, and in fact, by the laws of the Church here and every where, they are so visited, however imperfectly those laws may be executed¹.

But where external decency is not violated, we cannot hope to distinguish the true Christian from the false, the worldly from the spiritual man, with sufficient certainty to enable us to divide the one from the other, and, on that very account, we are expressly forbidden to attempt it. This is strongly marked in the parable of the wheat and the tares, as *contrasted* with that of the marriage supper. In the latter, the difference between the approved and the reprobate is open and palpable: in the former, there is a general similarity. In the one case, the king says to "his servants," "bind him hand and foot." In the other case, the direction is, "Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together till the harvest." Again, the guest who had not on a wedding garment, is but one, a presumptuous and remarkable offender; but the tares are largely intermingled with the wheat, the exact proportion being indeterminate.

It is not here contended that we gain from these passages of Scripture a direct authority for Church censures, which are plainly defensible on other grounds: but as the penal jurisdiction of the Church does, in fact, extend to gross derelictions, but does not, and cannot, take cognizance of mere worldliness and insincerity, it is shown that there is nothing inconsistent in the above parables with such a practice: that the expulsion of the

¹ See the Rubric to the Communion and Communion Services.

intruding guest does not suggest the necessity of such a process of excommunication as should leave no further separation to be effected at the day of judgment: nor, on the other hand, the prohibition to root out the tares from among the wheat, tie up the hands of the Church, in those cases where there is no danger of mistaking the one for the other.

SERMON VIII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.
OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

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MATTHEW xiii. 11.

Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

HAVING thus considered the nature of our Saviour's heavenly kingdom, as exhibited in his own prophetic announcement, it only remains to examine somewhat more nearly, the objections which may be raised to the above statements, by those who take a different view of the Gospel economy. The kingdom of heaven, it will be asserted, is not "the Church," certainly not any *visible* Church, but the reign of Christian principles, represented in the persons of true believers, known to God alone, and bound together in a *mystical* body. It has no outward representative on earth, fixed by divine authority. Or again, if a fixed outward developement were contemplated by our Saviour, and actually effected by his Apostles, the whole scheme has been frustrated by the corruption of mankind, and the wiles of the devil.

That the kingdom of heaven, or of God, is the Church in the sense given to these terms by our Saviour, appears (as above shown) from his own words. That the Church actually founded, and so named by the Apostles, should correspond to this idea, and *tend* to realize it, (not a hint in Scripture appearing to the contrary,) is, to say the least, a probable conclusion. That this Church, if it ever existed, should have been immediately lost—that in the short and

almost evanescent period that elapsed between the end of Scriptural, and the beginning of ecclesiastical history, a sudden, complete, and final apostasy took place, by which the true Church was totally destroyed, leaving in its stead a mere *caput mortuum*, deprived of all virtue and energy; still, however, ostensibly existing under the same name, and affecting the same functions: this can be regarded as little better than mere assertion, the last resource of theory, at once desperate and determined. But if it did not perish then, fading out of sight, as its founders were gradually withdrawn, (as if the miraculous gifts by which its first establishment was effected, were essential to its existence,) if it survived the last of the Apostles, it becomes matter of history, and so continues to the present hour.

The *necessity* of a visible Church, at once Catholic and Apostolic, is again beginning to be recognised, even among those Dissenters whose protest against all religious bodies, as they are at present constituted, and in particular against the national establishment, is most loud and decisive. I regard this as a sign, and on the whole, a favourable sign of the times. It exhibits a yearning in the right direction, though sadly and needlessly frustrated. We may call on these persons to fix the vanishing point when we lose sight entirely of the Apostolic Church, and if it be placed after the date of the last Book of Scripture, and before that of Saint Clement's Epistle to the Romans, to assign some colourable grounds for such a supposition. Meanwhile we would affectionately suggest to their consideration, whether, in discerning the eternal constitution of the Saviour, amid the imperfections of that human agency to which it has been committed, (imperfections deplored on all hands, but not, if the word of prophecy

be sure, amounting to universal apostasy,) they might not find both an exercise of faith, and an occasion of humility, very suitable to their present condition, and entirely agreeable to the word of God. Is it that they have a clearer vision of the Saviour's presence, and a fuller acquaintance with his person, that they will not stoop to recognise his footsteps, in the trodden pathway of his own appointments? that they ignore, where others believe, behold, and worship!

By their own avowal, there was once one fold, one visible fold, under one Shepherd. Why will they not remain within its sacred pale, however they may mourn over its altered state, and be content to "hear His voice¹," till the hour arrive, when they shall "see Him as He is²?" What if the flock be mingled, who are we, that we should set a mark of reprobation on our neighbours, before the time—we, as individuals? Say, that the Church is commissioned to bind and loose, and that she does not, cannot fulfil her office. What is the cause of this? Is it not that those who seem marked out, and, as it were, expressly qualified to be defenders of its authority; those to whom it is given to know most surely, and feel most deeply, this and the like truths, too often proclaim them *out* of the Church, and *against* it, not *in* and *for* it? Who are we, that we should attempt to form, or re-create the Church of God? Let us reform ourselves, and *become* the Church that *is*. The Church continues holy, though churchmen be impure. It is a far diviner thing than it seems.

Suffer me to address my expostulation to those by whom it will be best understood. You will say that the prophets testified against Israel. Nay, the Lord by their mouths. Perhaps their mantle has fallen upon you. I

¹ John x. 3.

² 1 John iii. 2.

will not gainsay it. Whosoever is possessed of a truth, let him utter it in God's name. If his "heart burn within him," let him speak. But did the prophets cease to be "of Israel," the stiff-necked, and backsliding Israel, which they rebuked? Did they account it merely Gentile, or affect to be themselves the only children of the Covenant? Did they live among the nations, and deem their personal testimony sufficient to free their souls? their personal holiness a barrier against ceremonial and actual defilement?

But the Lord hath said, "Come forth, and be ye separate." He has said so—to his Church. And *so it is*. And when ye quit it, ye will go back to the world—to the world, and to yourselves. For whither will ye go? You say that the Church is worldly—has confounded itself with the world, and become a part of it. And it may be freely granted, that of the *men* by whom at a given place or time it is visibly represented, the fleeting atoms of which it is temporarily composed, too many forget their high vocation. But are these the Church itself'?

Blessed be God! the Saviour's kingdom, however dishonoured and betrayed, is still a hallowed precinct, even as the Temple at Jerusalem was still the house of God, consecrated and holy, though the Jews had made it a den

¹ The Church, ἐν δυνάμει, considered potentially, and as a living idea, informing and actualizing the outward presentation. In writing upon such subjects in these times, the complaint of the Roman poet cannot but recur to the mind.

Nec me animi fallit, Graiorum obscura
reperta

Difficile illustrare Latinis versibus
esse

(Multa novis verbis præsertim cum sit
agendum)

Propter egestatem linguæ et rerum
novitatem.

In our case, however, the difficulty arises not from the poverty of the language, but from neglect of its wealth. The terms and thoughts have fallen together into desuetude. But a new, and in this respect, a better era, has already commenced.

of thieves. When the Lord “was eaten up with the zeal of his house¹,” he purged it, but he did not destroy it. He was brought to it when a child; he went up to it when a man; he taught in it daily. Its ultimate removal, relative to the Jews, was a punishment, because they knew not the day of their visitation. But the system which it represented, passed away, not because it was invalidated, but because it was fulfilled. The Temple was not desecrated, though the worshippers were unworthy.

The Church is emphatically that on earth, which is *not* the world. It is not even represented exclusively by men. Sacraments, creeds, primitive liturgies, Catholic traditions—these at least can never be “profane or common;” and wherever these are, we may assure ourselves that we are on holy ground, though it be too often trodden by unholy feet. True, there is a human ministry, but it is not *as men* that they represent the Church. Whatever value we set upon their learning and piety, it is not their relative excellence of any kind as individuals, that constitutes them symbols of a sacred institution. We look for the Lord’s own mark upon them; we regard them as links of a divine and everlasting ordinance, and know that for covenanted blessings they are to us, that which they are appointed to be, whatever they may be in themselves.

And will ye fly from these things to yourselves, be ye many or few, saying, we are devoted, we are faithful, we have quitted the service of mammon, and because of our meetness, *we* are the Church? I will not deny, I cheerfully own, that many of you *are* distinguished for zeal and piety; but if you think that these will dispense with the outward pledges of God’s covenant, “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of².” “Cease ye from

¹ John ii. 17.

² Luke ix. 55.

man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of'?"

Israel, we know, committed spiritual adultery with the nations, and leaned on the broken reed of Egypt¹. Yet was there a remnant that had not bowed the knee to Baal. Did these deny their circumcision, profane the sacrifice, forsake the Temple, and abjure the priesthood? Grant that the Church has been worldly and politic. Shall those who call themselves witnesses for Christ, slight their privileges, and renounce their obligations as members of his own Church; members by baptism and early profession, confirmed by sacramental communion, by common prayer, nay, in some cases, by ordination vows, and think that they do God service?

The above remarks are addressed to persons, whose conceptions generally, on the subject of God's appointments, however remote from the truth, are pure and lofty; the high ground which I have taken in speaking of the Lord's Church, is not wholly inconsistent with their own views. As often happens with those whose practical conclusions differ most widely, we have many principles in common: and hence I have been led to anticipate much of that which must again be submitted to discussion. In particular, I have assumed the fact of an Apostolic Church, once existing, and intended for permanence, though in the opinion of these religionists, death-stricken in its infancy, and long since withdrawn from the earth. The better informed among them, the few who think for the many, will hardly, it is believed, dignify their own assembly with the title of an Apostolic Church: rather, as the forlorn, but only resource of a few scattered

¹ Isaiah ii. 22.

² Jerem. iii. 8. Isaiah xxxiv. 6.

believers, fleeing from the wrath to come, and meeting by the way, for mutual comfort and consolation. It is difficult, indeed, with men who put forth no standard of belief to arrest the flux of religious opinion, for a sufficient length of time, to take its likeness, and present it in a shape that will be recognised and admitted by those to whom it is imputed. If, however, such, or such a modification of doctrine, be falsely ascribed to one party, it will be claimed and gloried in by another, at once its nearest neighbour, and bitterest enemy.

But it is time to consider the far more prevalent opinion which denies the original foundation of any one visible Church, to be extended over all lands, and continued through all time. The Saviour's kingdom, according to this view of Scripture, is the *reign*, not the *realm*, of evangelical principles: the Saviour's Church, the *secret* company of his elect: a community of faith and love, visible, indeed, in its effects, and one in its object: but not represented by any one permanent society, or subjected to any invariable constitution. Hence, whenever power, authority, or privilege, is attributed to the Church in Scripture, if it be an external regimen that is spoken of, it is referable to voluntary association, and human law; if a spiritual prerogative be the thing intended, it is predicable of faith itself, and not of any "congregation of faithful men." And whereas the Church of Scripture is confessedly characterized by unity, permanence, holiness, and other sublime and spiritual qualities, these are said to be attributes of a mystical body, and not of any positive incorporation.

It is my wish to state this opinion fully and fairly, not as the doctrine of a particular party, but as the plea of all those who deny any unity of the Church, but that which

results invisibly from a common spirit; any universality, but that which is indicated by a common faith; any apostolicity, but that which is referable to a common origin: and yet, thus stated, it seems to contradict itself. For if the actuating spirit, the faith professed, the original source, were indeed one and the same, must not a certain degree of fixed and external unity be the result, the same cause producing an uniform effect, co-extensive with its operation? Shall the one spirit suggest ministrations essentially different, an identical faith be couched in contradictory creeds, or the Apostles be truly followed in more than one way? How then can all the forms of Christianity be equally Catholic and Apostolic?

The visible and invisible Church stand to each other in the relation of body and soul, each of which implies the other. What is body, but spirit defined and made manifest? That the former is divine, necessary, and invariable; the other human, casual, and fluctuating, is a position in analogy with nothing else that we know either of nature or of God. Rather let us believe that when God sent a new spirit into the world, he sent with it a living body, each divinely accommodated to each other, a body moulded of earthly materials, but informed by a living soul.

It is not, however, on such speculations that we rest, either in whole or in part, as a ground of religious doctrine. They are *admissible* only as a counterpart of Scripture, presented to the *understanding* (where this is possible) in a logical form; and in all cases submitted to that *reason* which alone is entitled "to search the deep things of God:" and they are *useful* when they prove that there are other modes of conceiving God's truth, equally self-consistent, equally plausible, and at least equally

sublime with those, the main recommendation of which is their easy adaptation to popular moulds of thought. But they are never *necessary*; and hence if there be any to whom the above reasonings appear inconclusive, unsuitable, or obscure, they may pass them over, and try the question exclusively by a reference to the written Word.

It will be my object to show that the notion of an invisible Church, not outwardly represented, the true and only subject of divine appointment, is purely gratuitous, as regards the word of God. It is not required by any text of Scripture; it is inconsistent with its general tenour.

When our Lord speaks of his people in respect of their personal qualifications, his mode of expression is perfectly unambiguous. The opening of the Sermon on the Mount is an instance of this. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness. Blessed are the merciful, the pure in heart, the peace-makers. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake¹." These are "the good," with whom, as our Lord declares, "the bad" were to be gathered confusedly in from the world at large, by the parabolic net. And theirs is "the kingdom of heaven," the eventual blessings of the Gospel; theirs exclusively. Whoever else may be found within the same precinct, — whoever else may live ostensibly under the same dominion, — the *prize* of their high calling is promised exclusively to them. And again, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before

¹ Matt. v. 3—10.

my Father which is in heaven¹.” “He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved².” In all of these cases, it is the Church which is described in the persons of its real members, and in respect of their individual qualifications; the opposite description of persons being, in each case, excluded and condemned. “Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven.” “He that believeth not shall be damned.”

On other occasions, however, our Lord addresses his disciples, or alludes to them, as a body; and although it is plainly a *visible* body of which he speaks, yet his words are unaccompanied by any restriction or condition. To the individuals, of course his declarations can only be understood conditionally; but of the incorporation, they are spoken absolutely.

To take a single instance. How are we to understand that soothing assurance, “Fear not, little flock, it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom³?” What little flock is here intended? Not the apostles *personally*, for one of them was condemned already, and his bishopric destined for another: besides, “He prayed not for these alone, but for them also which should believe on him through their word⁴.” Not the invisible Church, for that is a “great multitude, which no man can number⁵.” How, I repeat, are we to understand these words, if not of the Church *visibly* represented by the apostles, its intended founders and rulers, the “little flock” whom our Saviour *saw* before him?—the embodied assembly, as it then existed?

And what is the kingdom thus assured to them? Doubtless the privileges of the Gospel. But why so

¹ Matt. x. 32.

² Mark xvi. 16.

³ Luke xii. 32.

⁴ John xvii. 20.

⁵ Rev. vii. 9.

termed? We know in what sense it was understood by the apostles. They trusted that it was he who should restore the *kingdom* to Israel, in the expectation of seeing themselves invested with temporal authority and power. They erred. "My kingdom is not from hence¹," were the Saviour's own words to the Roman governor. It was a spiritual dominion which he came to establish. But was it therefore invisible? How then could it be given to his "little flock?" given, not only to enjoy, but to exercise, for the words can mean nothing less². How could it devolve upon the apostles? Surely, an outward administration is here indicated, and if so, a visible kingdom³. In a word, throughout the whole of our Saviour's discourse, we trace a reference, expressed or understood, to a body of men, either actually existing, or to be immediately established in the world, and to be perpetually kept up and increased, by preaching of the word, and by baptism. Even of that little flock to whom his words were more immediately addressed, he must be understood to speak generally in respect of this outward profession, not individually in respect of their personal meetness, "for one of them was a devil⁴."

If, however, any doubt remain on this point, the language of the apostles, after our Lord's death, removes even the semblance of ambiguity. Thus, when St. Paul declares to the Ephesians, that Christ is made the head of all things to his Church⁵, we cannot but attribute to

¹ John xviii. 36.

² See POTTER *On Church Government*, chap. i.

³ To place a number of individuals under the rule of a most wise and beneficent monarch, is

indeed to confer on them an inestimable benefit; but in so doing, can we be said to give them a kingdom?

⁴ John vi. 70.

⁵ Eph. i. 22.

this term the highest meaning of which it is susceptible. That Church of which Christ is the head, must be the same which he himself declared that he would build, in which he would dwell, with which he would be one, and for which he would intercede; who were to eat his flesh, and drink his blood, and receive his spirit. Again, the same apostle declares that "Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish¹." Whatever we understand by an invisible, spiritual, and real, as contrasted with a visible, temporal, and professing Church, is surely included in this description. Yet the sanctification here spoken of, is that which comes "by washing of water," and "by the word,"—by baptism and preaching. No doubt it is the *grace* of baptism, and "the word preached, mixed with faith in them that hear it²," which we are to understand; but the effect is, in each case, pointedly referred to its cause, involving the necessity both of the visible ministry, and of the outward sacrament. The glorious Church then, here spoken of, is that which is constituted by the grace of baptism, and a lively reception of the word, conjointly, in strict conformity to the declaration of our Saviour: "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved."

It is not pretended that the body here described is actually commensurate with the visible Church *considered as an aggregation of individuals*. This perfect coincidence is reserved for another era in the history of the Lord's people, which they are even now expecting. Mean-

¹ Eph. v. 25—27.

² Heb. iv. 2.

while, though every ostensible member be truly united to the body, comparatively few avail themselves of that divine union so as actually to enjoy the unspeakable benefits of which it is the living source. In this sense, it must, alas! be confessed, that "all are not Israel, who are of Israel'." It is the Catholic body, taken collectively, the visible representative of the spiritual Church, itself spiritual and holy, to which the apostle alludes¹.

In the Acts of the Apostles, the primary acceptation refers, as might be expected from the subject, to the visible assembly, yet never as *merely* visible. Thus, it is said, "the Lord added daily to the Church" (of course the external body) "such as should be saved²:" in the original, "the saved." So the Church, the visible

¹ Rom. ix. 6.

² In a living body, there may be some members in which that life, which is an attribute of the whole, is dormant or extinct. Yet it is still a living body. And in thus speaking of it, we do not refer to the invisible life *exclusively*, but to the animated body,—the body and the life in one. It is so with the Church. Of its members, some *realise* no portion of the common life; yet, as a whole, it is the spouse of Christ. If we speak of it as a spiritual Church, we do not cease to regard it as outward and visible. We attribute to it its high and heavenly character, in so far as it corresponds to its definition; but it is still the visible Church.

If the visible and invisible Church do not mutually correspond, in what sense can either be called a body? The mere aggregate of professing Christians,

can have no more than a semblance of a body, an *outward* unity; and this has long ago been lost. The mere aggregate of true believers cannot have even that semblance. They wait to be embodied. When St. Paul says, "Let there be no schism in the body," (1 Cor. xii. 25,) we cannot but understand the visible Church. Yet surely he means the "body" of Christ. The idea of body includes outwardness and manifestation, connexion and unity, and consequently implies not merely separation and number of parts, but an inward and invisible spirit. In a word, body is that which embodies. If the visible Church be truly called a body, it is because it reveals the invisible Church externally, and by communion among the members, makes it one.

² Acts ii. 47.

assembly, consisted of *the saved*, not finally, for we know that many fell away, but such as had received spiritual graces, and were put in a state of salvation. The whole matter is comprised in the words of St. Paul, when he says, "There is one body, *and* one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all¹." These words are addressed to the Ephesians, or rather to the family of Christ throughout the world, and to the end of time: all of whom are said to constitute one body, informed by one spirit, the Holy Ghost, called to the same hope, under one Lord Jesus Christ, holding the same faith, and having received the same baptism, being the children of one heavenly Father, the supreme God, who pervades the universe, without being confounded with it, who is not only *in*, and *through*, but *above* all things, and of whom the faithful in particular are living temples. Such is the holy Catholic Church, the members of which are, in Scriptural language, entitled saints; an appellation given to them in Scripture, not in respect of their individual or relative sanctity, but collectively, as of "a people holy to the Lord²." Into this holy community they were admitted by the appointed rite of baptism, the qualification for which was a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus³; and whenever, through faith in the recipient, its holy efficacy was realised, its effect was that regeneration, of which our Saviour had spoken, when he told Nicodemus, that "except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot *enter* into the kingdom of heaven⁴." In the language of St. Paul, they were baptized into Christ;

¹ Eph. iv. 4.² Deut. vii. 6.³ Acts viii. 37.⁴ John iii. 6.

after which they are said to form "one body," not a mere assemblage of unconnected parts, but truly one, after a divine and incomprehensible manner; a living body, the members of which kept up a perpetual communion together, and with their great head, by the continual celebration of certain solemn mysteries, instituted by Christ himself, and entitled the Lord's Supper. I forbear to speak at present of the rulers by whom this spiritual community was governed, of the divisions by which it was torn, the false doctrine by which it was corrupted, or the persecutions by which it was tried. Enough has been said to prove that there existed, in the time of the apostles, a visible Church, united by an outward order, as well as by a spiritual communion, and called in Scripture "the body of Christ." Where is it now?

Sick and dismembered we know it is, and has been, but we cannot believe that "the gates of hell have prevailed against it," and that it has perished from the face of the earth. Ultimate salvation is no doubt an individual gift, depending upon personal meetness, not indeed as the efficient cause, but as the indispensable condition: yet it is uniformly associated in Scripture with the use of means, with an appointed ministry, and a holy bond of fellowship. A solitary, independent Christianity, unassisted and uncommunicated, has no prototype in Holy Writ. Every true believer is a member of a true Church; every true Church is a portion of the Church Catholic. Is it not, then, a question of unspeakable importance to determine whether the religious body with which *we* are connected be truly united to that universal communion founded by the apostles, of which we have so full an account in Scripture? In other words, whether

our Church is, or is not, a part of the holy Church universal. If it be not, we are indeed walking in a vain shadow,—we are yet in our sins.

If, however, we are free from apprehension on this score, if, to confine the question in the narrowest limits, the Church, into which we have been baptized, and wherein we communicate, be for *us*, a true Church, it is *for us* the only Church, the only representative of that primitive congregation, which was founded by the apostles on the day of Pentecost.

May the Lord assist us to “meditate on these things!”

SERMON IX.

THE SAINTS, OR THE CHURCH AS DELINEATED IN THE APOSTOLIC SCRIPTURES.

PART I.—THE NATURE OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

1 CORINTHIANS xii. 27, 28.

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

THE Christian Church, or Catholic assembly of the saints, is shown to us in Scripture under two points of view. In the parables, and generally in the public teaching of our Saviour, it is represented to us as a kingdom, and with this idea correspond most of the notions which we gather from the Old Testament. In the more confidential and explicit disclosures made by our Lord to his apostles, and particularly in his farewell sermon, recorded by St. John, a deeper insight is afforded us into the nature of that divine economy. It is revealed to us as a living body, which idea is further developed by St. Paul, with wonderful force of reasoning, and felicity of illustration. The first of these is the formal idea of the Church,—the Church as seen from without: and from this we collect inferentially its internal nature. The outward modification indicates the inward life. The second is the idea of the Church, considered with a

primary reference to the hidden life, the shaping principle within: and from this we argue, under the guidance of the last-named apostle, to the outward form. Thus the two ideas, traced to their origin, and followed out into their consequences, ultimately coincide. The king, in the one description, corresponds to the head in the other; the subjects of the former, to the members of the latter. In both there is a real unity, and consequently a vital union. In both there is a common centre, internal connexion and intercourse, subordination of office and honour, a general state of dependancy, and a controlling power.

Thus in whichever light we view the Christian Church, we arrive at the same conclusions. We expect the same phenomena, and refer to the same cause. Yet each of these representations suggests its own train of thought, and conveys its own peculiar lesson. When we think of the Church as a kingdom, we are led to consider its outward form and developement. We look for a positive institution, and a visible order. There must be a sovereign, the father of his people, ruling with absolute, yet paternal authority over a given realm. There must be dutiful, affectionate, and loyal service. We anticipate a settled policy, laws and ordinances, some of permanent, others of occasional obligation. We expect to find delegated powers; an appointed legislature and executive; we are not surprised when we hear of official distinctions, a succession of persons, temporal and local relations. In a word, we are prepared to meet the question of Church government.

Very different, though in perfect harmony with the preceding, are the reflections into which we are carried, when the Church is made known to us as a body, not a

mere corporation connected by outward bands, but a body, such as our own, animated by an invisible life; tenanted by a mysterious spirit; having one head, on which every part is strictly dependant; many members, mutually connected, sharing in the common energies of the body so long as they belong to it; inert and powerless, when cut off. We see, still more clearly than in the first case, that there must be unity in the whole, communion between the parts. There is a principle of growth, and we ask ourselves how it is exercised. There is a liability to sickness and infirmity, and we inquire under what conditions we may expect health and vigour. Such, I believe, are the steps by which we approach the question of CHURCH SACRAMENTS.

That the first of these ideas corresponds to the fact, has already been shown at some length in my former discourses. The Church is a kingdom, and from this idea, as set forth in the scriptural record, the formal government of the Church is naturally and inevitably evolved; its visible administration as it appears from without, and as it is recognised in the world. But for those within, there is "a more excellent way." Taking the fact of a sacramental union with Christ as the fundamental idea of the Christian Church, and assuming—say rather, averring with St. Paul, that the body thence resulting is the body of Christ, that it has many members, and that different offices are assigned to each; taking this idea as the ground of our investigation, we obtain the same results as before, with this remarkable difference, that whereas in the former case, we had a formal administration, we have now vital functions; and all those relations, whether of person, time, and place, which we know to be requisite for the orderly government of a kingdom, are seen to be

the *necessary* manifestations of an inward life, spreading through every limb of that body, with which Christ is not confounded, but in some mysterious manner identified, by the apostle, endowing it with its proper energy, and directing it to its appointed end. Thus though on the present occasion I propose to treat of the visible constitution of the Church, as determined by the apostles, yet taking the twelfth chapter of the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians as the text of our inquiry, I must first direct your thoughts to that sublime incorporate union of Christians with their great Head, and to their membership in one mystical body, barely premising that the Church of which I am about to speak is still the same which our Saviour built upon a rock, and described as the kingdom of heaven.

Thus in seeking to ascertain the constitution actually given to the Church by the apostles, it will not be sufficient to take along with us the notions, important as these are, which connect themselves with the idea of an universal kingdom paternally administered—notions corresponding generally to the visible economy of the Church. We must recognise in the system of outward forms, under which, as Christians, we find ourselves placed, the necessary working of a vital principle. So shall we see in those forms to which we have hitherto annexed an arbitrary value, as intimate a connexion with the purposes for which they are employed, as there exists between thoughts and words. The appointments which we have justly revered from the *authority* under which they are made, will be further esteemed as the exponents of an inherent *power*; the instruments of an indwelling virtue, and real efficacy, which they show forth and communicate.

Are these positions derived exclusively by induction from general principles? Have they no direct authority from Scripture; no express confirmation from fact? If so, there is reason to suspect some error in the process. At all events, conclusions, thus unsupported, thus merely speculative, must be looked upon rather as curious than important. Whatever in these matters is of serious concernment, whether to the Church at large, or to the individuals of which it is composed, is made known to us, not only with moral certainty, but with sufficient plainness, as a positive revelation. We have not to deal with insulated truths, resting on a single inference. It is incumbent upon me to show that the above statements are distinctly reflected from the sacred page. I must endeavour to prove that the same order of thought is followed out in the Bible, both in the progressive system of facts therein recorded, and in the declarations of the inspired writers.

That the people of God have always formed a peculiar kingdom, subsisting under covenant with their heavenly Sovereign, has already been sufficiently demonstrated. That this federal connexion is in fact a vital union, to realise which, is the great aim of Christianity, and the true explanation of the Christian Church; in particular that we are ingrafted into this "one body" by baptism, and maintained in it, as by every other act of faith, so peculiarly and emphatically by the supper of the Lord, I shall endeavour to set forth more fully when we come to speak expressly of these holy rites. Let it suffice at present to evince from Scripture that the Christian religion, as exhibited in the persons of the saints, *i. e.*, as it exists in fact, can only be understood in connexion with the united assembly of its faithful professors: and that

the union here indicated is as real and intimate as that of the members in a living body. Now, what is the language of St. Paul in the remarkable chapter to which I have above alluded? Speaking of those “spiritual gifts” with which the Church at that time was favoured, “there are diversities of gifts,” he declares, “but the same spirit,” “and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal’.” So then, if there be still *any* gifts, or *any* operations, remaining in the Church, (modified by difference of times and circumstance we may well expect them to be, for we are told that they are *diverse*; but if there be *any* gifts or operations remaining, and if there be none, the Church is extinct,) it is still the same Spirit, the same Lord, the same God, that worketh all in all. Moreover, there is a *visible* display, a “manifestation of the Spirit,” of whatever kind. Whether it be stated or occasional ministrations, official powers or personal graces, wisdom, knowledge, faith, miracles, prophecy, the discerning of spirits, tongues, or interpretations, all these worketh that same spirit, dividing severally to every man as he will. “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit’.” Here then we have the all-important fact, to which I have so often referred, not merely asserted in express terms, but made the basis of conclusions of universal application.

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 4—7.

² 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. Compare Eph. iii. 6; Col. i. 8.

The Church is the body of Christ, (St. Paul does not scruple to describe it as mysteriously incorporated with its divine head, “of his flesh and of his bones¹,”) and therefore the several functions of its members are all manifestations of the spirit, the operations of the Lord Christ, according to the will of God. We notice incidentally that we are all *baptized* into this body, sacramentally incorporated; and without insisting upon the apparent allusion to the “cup of blessing²,” of which we “all drink³,” it is evident that, by some outward religious act (and doubtless in a degree by all), every member of that body is *made* to participate of one spirit, and that a spiritual, that is, a real union, is the consequence. We all drink not *of*, but *into*, one spirit.

But it will be said, this is not made the foundation of any outward or stated economy. An outward order is indisputably indicated, and this must infallibly become stated (we know it *did* so) in exact proportion to the statedness of the occasion. This being uniform, that cannot vary, for under similar circumstances, the same causes must produce a similar effect. But how argues St. Paul?—That “the body is not one member, but many,” and that all the members have not the same office⁴. Some have a higher, some a lower function, there is a subordination of degrees, the feebler parts being accounted necessary, and the less honourable being invested with more abundant honour, tended and protected with especial tenderness, “that there may be no schism in the body,” the several members caring for and sympathising with one another. “Now ye are the body of Christ,” thus the apostle concludes, “and members in

¹ Eph. v. 30.

² 1 Cor. x. 3. Matt. xxvi. 27.

³ 1 Cor. x. 16.

⁴ Compare Rom. xii. 4—8.

particular. And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues¹.”

So it is THE CHURCH, the *visible* Church, of which the apostle speaks. It is *this* which is the body of Christ; and in this Church God has constituted a variety of offices. Of these, several, being of temporary use, have long ceased to exist. Others remain; we have still teachers, helps, governments. Shall we conclude, that of these divine establishments the permanent provisions enjoy less honour than the transitory? Shall we assert that God has not “set in the Church” those offices and functions which, as it plainly appears, were intended to continue; that ministerial order which the apostles set up “in every city” during their life-time, and left behind them at their death: while we attribute this august sanction to an order of things which reason, scripture, and experience, equally prove to have been, in some measure, occasional and preparatory? Why should we deny to the ultimate constitution of the Church the same authority which, in its initial state, is thus claimed for it by one of its apostolic founders?

Assuming what I shall hope presently to prove, that the three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons, truly exhibit the final disposition which the Church received from the apostles, shall we refuse to consider them as members of the body of Christ, performing their special offices, not merely under a sufficient sanction, but with appropriate and ample powers? Can we imagine that an administration has been given and confirmed, but that the spiritual gifts which belong to it are withheld?

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 27, 28.

² Tim. i. 5.

We are told that God hath set in the Church *first* apostles; and accordingly, in another place, it is said to be “built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone¹.” That these apostles had a part to perform in some degree different from that of their ostensible successors is of course admitted. To remember the words of the Saviour, and to give effect to his purposes, to testify what they had seen and heard, and to accredit their witness by signs and wonders; to establish a Church, and in so doing to provide it with a *common law*, which, whether written or unwritten, should henceforth be inherent in its constitution: this was a task for which they alone were fitted. This work could only be done once, and by *them*. Yet the Church thus planted had to be preserved, extended, and variously modified. In a secondary sense, it was still necessary to remember, to bear witness, to interpret, to legislate. A necessity still remained for economic, pastoral, and assistant administrations, embracing an extensive and diversified field of duty. Hence we find the apostolic commission almost immediately extended beyond the original twelve, while these retained, nevertheless, their peculiar and incommunicable character². They continued, I say, in the exclusive exercise of those functions which belonged to them as founders of the Catholic Church, and communicated such powers only as were necessary to uphold, to perpetuate, and to extend it³. Thus much of the apostolic office is as needful now

¹ Eph. ii. 20.

² Gal. i. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 5—9.
Phil. ii. 25. 2 Cor. viii. 23.

³ It follows then, that in all the ordinary parts of power and office, Christ did promise to be with

them to the end of the world, and therefore there must remain a power of giving faculty and capacity to persons successively for the execution of that, in which Christ promised perpetual assist-

as it was then; and although from a respectful feeling, the name of apostles, originally borne by these latter functionaries¹, was soon dropped, the more general title of bishops or overseers, after the death of the first or great apostles, being adopted in a restricted sense, to designate their apostolic assistants and successors, this change went no further than to fix and to appropriate the name, by which they had already been distinguished, rather perhaps as a description than as a title. Add to this, that though the plantation of particular churches has always formed one of their high duties, yet as the Gospel was preached, and churches established, in almost every part of the civilized world, in the first age of Christianity, the missive character of the apostolic commission was soon, in a manner, superseded. In the natural course of things there was less and less occasion "to go and teach all nations²," while it every day became more necessary to "feed the flock of God³" in particular places, and to watch over "the household of faith⁴." Thus those who at first had been *chiefly* missionaries, presently settled into stationary overseers, with fixed sees⁵. Missionary

ance. For since this perpetual assistance could not be meant of abiding with their persons, who in a few years were to leave the world, it must needs be understood of their function, which either it must be succeeded to, or else it was as temporary as their persons. But in the extraordinary privileges of the apostles they had no successors, therefore of necessity must be constituted in the ordinary office of apostolate. Now, what is this ordinary office? Most certainly, since the extraordinary (as is evident) was only a help for the founding and beginning, the other

are such as are necessary for the perpetuating of a Church. Now, in clear evidence of sense, these offices and powers are, *preaching, baptizing, consecrating, ordaining, and governing*; for these were necessary for the perpetuating of a Church, &c.—TAYLOR *on Episcopacy*. sect. 3.

¹ See TAYLOR *on Episcopacy*. sect. 4 and 5.

² Matt. xxviii. 19.

³ 1 Peter v. 2.

⁴ Gal. vi. 10. Compare Matt. xxiv. 45; Luke xii. 42.

⁵ Thus Titus, and some other with him, who came to Jerusalem

enterprises, though still carried on, became comparatively rare and occasional; and in this way, perhaps, while the office remained essentially unchanged, the name of apostle would naturally give place to that of bishop. It is to be remarked, however, that the first apostles were also entitled bishops. Both of these characters had been expressly communicated to them by him to whom they originally and pre-eminently belonged. But the former was their distinctive appellation, while the latter, under the altered circumstances of the Church, was alone retained by their successors.

Again, prophecy and teaching, exposition of the Divine will, however ascertained, and catechetical instruction; can we doubt that these were “set in the church” by a perpetual appointment? Can we doubt that, emanating from the Church, and performed with due authority (not according to the will of man, but as parts of a divine ordinance,) they carry with them a portion of that life by which the Church itself is informed, and from which its essential energies are derived? Will “the word of wisdom and knowledge” be denied by that spirit who divideth to every man severally as he will? For what

with the Corinthian benevolence, are called *ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν*, *the apostles of the churches*. Apostles, I say, in the episcopal sense. They were none of the twelve, they were not of *immediate divine mission*, but of *apostolic ordination*, they were actually bishops, as I shall show hereafter. Titus was bishop of Crete, and Epaphroditus of Philippi, and these were the apostles, for Titus came with the Corinthian, Epaphroditus with the Colossian liberality. So that it is plain that

their apostolate, being not relative to the churches whose benevolence they carried, and they having churches of their own, as Titus had Crete, and Epaphroditus had Philippi, their apostolate was a fixed residence, and superintendancy of their several churches. (TAYLOR'S *Episcopacy Asserted*. sec. iv.) Perhaps it would be more correct to say that their apostolate *became* a fixed residence, and, *as such*, came to be exclusively distinguished as an episcopate.

is the will of the Spirit? Free and unrestricted we know it is and must be, manifesting itself in divers manners, neither to be anticipated nor controlled. For every good gift by which the Christian man is distinguished, of whatever kind it may be, is spiritual, and must be so accounted. But are we therefore to conclude that the influence of the spirit is casual or arbitrary? We are assured that it is a legitimate object of prayer. *This* at least is matter of direct precept, accompanied by promise; and can we doubt that it follows *generally* the lines of that divine order which was given to the Church for this very end, that it might serve as an administration of the spirit?

But where, it will be asked, are the miraculous powers which are so constantly attributed to the true Church in Holy Writ? If you draw conclusions in favour of any existing institution from the twelfth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, or from any similar description of the apostolic Church, you must show that the same conditions are fulfilled in both. Where are your gifts of healing, your discerning of spirits, your diversities, and interpretations of tongues?

Now on this it might be sufficient to remark, that "every manifestation of the spirit is given to profit withal," that is, for the good of the Church¹; and if it can be shown that no good would now result from the exhibition of supernatural gifts, (we are not speaking of the possession or the exercise of spiritual, that is to say supernatural, power, but of the miraculous evidence with which, in the first age of the Church, it was occasionally accompanied,) nay, if we cannot prove that a miraculous

¹ Πρὸς τὸ συμφερόν scil. τῆς ἐκκλησίας.—SCHLEUS. *Lex.* in verbo.

display of power is essential to ministerial efficacy at all times, and not merely an attendant circumstance,—a gift bestowed as long as it was wanted, and no longer,—unless we can establish this position on incontrovertible grounds, the absence of miracles for so many ages only makes good the doctrine of this very chapter, that though the spirit be everywhere and always present in the Church, the mode of His operations varies with the occasion. We know as a fact, that the first Christians did for special purposes work miracles, and that their successors in the same faith did not; and unless we know from other sources that the condemnation of the latter is implied in this difference, we can only infer that such is the course of God's providence, guided by infinite wisdom for the benefit of His Church and people. I say the fact alone might teach us this lesson, if we could give no other account of the matter. But a reverent consideration of the subject will, if I mistake not, enable us to see the reason of the change.

For, what is the intention of a miracle, except to give a temporary vantage-ground to the spiritual principle in man, by which he may be enabled to shake off that dominion of the senses, at once bondage and idolatry, which prevents the true grounds of belief from being perceived or appreciated? But the frequent, not to say the perpetual repetition of such displays, would have the directly opposite effect. It would destroy all trust in that which is unseen, inward, and spiritual, and substitute sight for faith as a rule of religious conduct and belief; thus laying a heavier chain upon the wordly mind than that which it seeks to remove. For both visible nature and human life (apart from express revelation) are full of indications by which we are referred to a higher source

of information than that which is supplied by the senses. We see that the laws of nature supply no solution of the ultimate phenomena of nature, much less will any mechanical theory account for the action and reaction, the play and movement, observable in the world of man. Hence, to wait patiently for a better light, heedfully to watch for it, and trustfully to attend to it, has been recognised as affording the only hope of unriddling the mystery of existence, even before the "true light" "came unto his own".¹ Now the perpetual recurrence of portents, supposing them to retain their miraculous character, could only tend to counteract these yearnings, and give a more despotic empire to the senses. But it may be worth while to inquire how far the constant exhibition of supernatural power is compatible with that *miraculous* character on which so much stress is laid².

Miracles are represented in Scripture as of three kinds, powers, signs, and wonders³; of which the first is a general term expressing all supernatural acts or faculties, and therefore includes whatever we understand both by a sign and by a wonder. Now, a wonder or portent has evidently attained its object when it has roused attention. By its definition, it is something

¹ John i. 9. 11.

² *August. de Vera Relig. cap. 25, t. i. 763.* "F. Accipimus majores nostros, eo gradu fidei quo a temporalibus ad æterna conscenditur, visibilia miracula (non enim aliter poterant) secutos esse: per quos id actum est, *ut necessaria non essent posteris.* Cum enim Ecclesia Catholica per totum orbem diffusa atque fundata sit, nec miracula illa in nostra tempora durare permissa sunt, ne

animus semper visibilia quæreret, et eorum consuetudine frigeret genus humanum, quorum novitate flagravat: nec jam nobis dubium esse oportet iis esse credendum, qui cum ea prædicarent quæ pauci assequuntur, se tamen sequendos populis persuadere potuerunt."— Referred to by HOOKER, *Eccl. Pol.* Book V. ch. LXVI. 3; and the entire quotation is given in Keble's edition.

³ *Δυναμεις, σημεία, τέρατα.*

strange, unusual, and marvellous. If it recurred frequently, it would soon cease to excite surprise, and thus defeat its own end. Moreover, it is in every case the forerunner of change. In a permanent dispensation, therefore, it can have no place, and it need have none. It is a fearful warning, by which the faithful and the faithless alike are admonished, once for all, of that which is to come.

Considered as a sign, the object of a miracle is to procure credit, as it were by advance, for something not yet tested by experience. It establishes a truth, not for the time merely, but for ever. Every sign, therefore, leaves behind it a fact, which henceforth supplies its place¹. The kingdom of the Gospel was announced by

¹ In the infancy of the world, signs and wonders were requisite to startle and break down that superstition, idolatrous in itself, and the source of all other idolatry, which tempts the natural man to seek the true cause and origin of public calamities in outward circumstances, persons and incidents; in agents, therefore, that were themselves but surges of the same tide, passive conductors of the one invisible influence, under which the total host of billows, in the whole line of successive impulse, swell and roll shoreward; there finally, each in its turn, to strike, roar, and be dissipated.

But with each miracle worked there was a truth revealed, which thenceforward was to act as its substitute. And if we think the Bible less applicable to us on account of the miracles, we degrade ourselves into mere slaves of sense and fancy, which are in-

deed the appointed medium between earth and heaven, but for that very cause stand in a desirable relation to spiritual truth, then only, when, as a mere and passive medium, they yield a free passage to its light. It was only to overthrow the usurpation exercised in and through the senses, that the senses were miraculously appealed to. Reason and religion are their own evidence. The natural sun is in this respect a symbol of the spiritual. Ere he is fully arisen, and while his glories are still under veil, he calls up the breeze to chase away the usurping vapours of the night-season, and thus converts the air itself into the minister of its own purification: not surely in proof or elucidation of the light from heaven, but to prevent its interception. — *Statesman's Manual*. S. T. C.

wonders, and confirmed by signs; fresh wonders and additional signs accompanied the national visitation of the Jews, when the Son of man came in judgment to his ancient Church, at the destruction of Jerusalem: and when this terrible figure shall be fulfilled finally, completely, and universally; whenever the last great change in the dispensation of the Church is at hand¹, we have reason to expect wonders yet more portentous, signs still more fearfully convincing. “The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall

¹ “That these (the miracles wrought by our Lord), by an unhappy Latinism, have been confounded as to their kind with the portents and prodigies which Livy tells of, I know well; but I know also that there is no authority in language for this confusion; that they are called ‘signs and powers,’ but never portents; that the word *τέρατα* is never once applied to them, and only once to the miracles of the apostles, and then in conjunction with the two other words of which I have spoken^a.” Surely there is some mistake or ambiguity here. The miracles of our Saviour are at least once characterized as wonders, *τέρατα*^b, and those of the apostles repeatedly^c. St. Paul enumerates “wonders” among the signs of an apostle^d, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews^e, the same term is employed in conjunction with signs

and divers miracles (powers), and gifts of the Holy Ghost, in reference to the confirmation generally afforded by God to the preaching of the Gospel. It seems more agreeable to the language of Scripture to consider the miracles, whether of our Lord or of the apostles, with respect to their origin, as powers, with respect to their use, both as signs and wonders: signs, when regarded as confirmatory; wonders, when their object is to awaken, to announce, to portend. In either sense their perpetual recurrence appears incompatible with the scheme of Providence.

The author of these Sermons may be allowed to express a regret that the admirable Letters from which the above quotation is taken, did not fall into his hands at an earlier period. Had they done so, it is probable that he would not have dwelt so long upon certain parts of his subject, already treated, though in somewhat a different point of view, by the author of that publication, with so much fulness and power.

^a *Letters to a Member of the Society of Friends by a Clergyman of the Church of England.* No. V. p. 71.

^b Acts ii. 22.

^c Acts ii. 43; v. 12; xiv. 3; *et passim*.

^d 2 Cor. xii. 12.

^e Heb. ii. 4.

fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven¹."

It is to be remarked, moreover, that the miraculous powers spoken of by St. Paul, are nowhere set apart as specific characters by which the Church was to be known or distinguished. They are mentioned incidentally with other graces, which we know to be ordinary and permanent, but which are placed by the apostles on precisely the same footing as the former;—attributed to the same origin, and referred to the same end. "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will²."

What can we conclude from this, except that they are all equally spiritual, equally supernatural; those that remain, as well as those that are no longer manifested; wisdom, knowledge, faith, prophecy, no less than the other gifts with which they are associated? Or if God has set in the Church a number of offices, some of which have passed away, while others remain, no distinction being made by the apostles between the two, can we doubt that the latter are exercised under the same sanctions as the former, or shall we refuse to attribute to them a spiritual efficacy corresponding to their original institution?

¹ Matt. xxiv. 29, 30.

² 1 Cor. xii. 8—11.

On the whole, we may conclude that the difference observable between the Church as described by St. Paul in this remarkable chapter, and the same Church at all subsequent periods, is more apparent than real. If in that first assembly of the saints there existed a spiritual communion, "knitting together" into one its actual members, not excluding those who were already asleep in the Lord¹, so is it now. If they were a body of which the unseen, but ever present, Saviour was the head, and if from him there proceeded an unfailing issue of life, that circulated through every limb, so is it still. Lastly, if the Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, found in the assembly of the saints his chosen dwelling-place, manifesting his presence by spiritual gifts and graces accommodated in kind and measure to the necessities of the Church, so must it be till the end shall have come. If the Saviour's Church be anywhere visible on earth, this must be its essential character. In every gift we must recognise the same spirit, in every ministry the same Lord, in every operation the same God working all in all.

We conclude, then, with reference to the visible constitution of the Church, as it has come down to us from our fathers, that "God has set some in the Church," some *persons* and some *things*. These are enumerated by the apostle; and with whatever difference of names, or variety of modification, we find his description so far applicable to the assemblies of the saints in succeeding ages, as fully to identify the Church which has been, with the Church that is. There are the same offices, and the same gifts, present with us, either in renewed operation, or in their permanent effects; in either case equally real,

¹ 1 Cor. xv.

equally lively, equally to be attributed to the same God, the same Lord, the same Spirit. We have still governors, teachers, ministers. The word of God from their mouths, the ordinances of God from their hands, are still “with power,”—still, we may believe,—*must* believe (if we will regard so blessed a privilege merely as a duty, and so be required to submit where we are called upon to enjoy),—still we may and must believe,—the word thus preached, the means of grace thus administered, carry with them a divine efficacy, emanating from that common life with which the whole body is animated, and flowing in channels expressly prepared for it by the will and counsel of the Most High. And shall we refuse to believe unless we see signs and wonders? Is not the visible existence of the Church, with all the marvellous effects which it has wrought in the world, and which (sore let and hindered as it is from within and from without) it still continues to produce,—a wonder sufficiently startling to induce us to refer an influence at once so potent and so peculiar, so unlike every *other* influence by which the course of human affairs is governed, whether of the flesh, the world, or the devil, to that which alone is none of these, God, manifested in Jesus Christ, and operating through the Holy Ghost. Or shall we still desire a sign? Is not a standing ministry, the word of revelation written and preached, sacraments duly administered, all essentially the same, now and of old time, here and everywhere; are not these so many signs of the Son of man, visible in the land of our pilgrimage, in the length and in the breadth of it? Lastly, in the outward unity of the Church, torn and dismembered as it is, yet as it may still be recognised upon a general review, in the tendency of its members, both by secret and outward communion, how-

ever imperfect and interrupted, to unite together for a purpose quite opposed to secular interests and carnal passions, may we not behold that body of Christ sensibly exhibited, of which we are members in particular? If so, we shall no longer doubt in what light we are to regard the ordinances of the Church, so far as they are inherent in its original constitution. We cannot doubt that they exist by the express appointment of God, who has “set the members in the body every one as it has pleased Him.”

And although the general scope of the chapter which we have been considering may be thought to refer primarily to those gifts and functions, which, in a restricted sense, we call *ministerial*, we cannot but conclude that every act which the Christian performs *as* a Christian, every situation which he fills *as* a Churchman,—that is to say, in the faith of Christ, and in communion with his fellow-believers,—shares in the same sanctions, and is entitled to the same respect. Whether Paul practise his craft as a tent-maker, or preach the Gospel to the Gentiles; whether Luke pursue his honourable calling as a physician, or record the acts of his Saviour, and of his chosen witnesses, for the perpetual instruction of the Church; nay, whether Cornelius discharge his duty as captain of the Italian band, or communicate to Peter the vision through which he became the first fruits of the Lord’s people among the Gentiles: whatever art, profession, or occupation, the believer performs in a believing spirit, he is doing the work of God, he is labouring in the Church of God, he may expect the blessing of God. “And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of thee.” Onesimus may serve Philemon, and yet “not

now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved¹." While they "of the household of Cæsar," not less nor more esteemed, from the comparative superiority of their worldly station, may be honoured by the special salutation of an apostle. For whatever we do at all, we may do unto the Lord, and as one of his own people.

But some are called to the peculiar service of the Temple. Matthew must leave sitting at the receipt of custom, not merely that he may follow Jesus as his disciple, but that he may be made his apostle and official witness. There are those whose sole vocation is to be "fishers of men." In the descriptions of the Church, contained in the writings of its founders, these naturally hold a prominent place. Now, although every Christian calling exercised under the general sanction of the Head of the Church, in so far as the sublime relation in which he stands to the several members of his body, is in each particular case personally recognised and asserted; yet the direct ministry of the Gospel appears placed under his more immediate regulation and control. We do not appear left in this instance to our own discretion, as in the ordinary affairs of life, to adopt such methods as we may deem most conducive to the end in view. It would seem that the plan devised by infallible Wisdom for the salvation of mankind, has not been wholly abandoned to the prudence or virtue of those human agents, which are nevertheless employed in the work. A definite arrangement appears to have been established, at the first foundation of the Church, the main lines of which may be ascertained with certainty, and from these we may reasonably conclude, it is neither lawful nor expedient to swerve.

¹ Philem. 16.

Such, at least, is the position which it will now be my business to maintain. Thus far I have attempted to set forth the incorporative union of the saints in one body, from which alone, as we learn from Scripture, is derived whatever efficacy or lively power is justly attributed to the appointed ministry of the Gospel. It has appeared from the language of St. Paul, to be nothing less than the outward manifestation of an indwelling life, invigorating every separate member, and fitting it for its appointed work, but more especially is it imparted to those who, by the *express* enactment of God, are “set in the Church,” to rule, to instruct, and to serve it. Our next inquiry will carry us further. We shall see that certain precise and immutable forms were impressed upon the Church by the apostles, partly to be gathered from their writings, partly exhibited in the Church itself, as it appears in primitive times, and as it has continued uninterruptedly to the present day. In a word, having considered the *nature* of the Apostolic Church, we shall now treat of its *constitution*.

SERMON X.

THE SAINTS, OR THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AS DELINEATED IN THE APOSTOLIC SCRIPTURES.

PART II.—THE CHURCH ADMINISTRATIVE, AND THE CHURCH COLLECTIVE.

REVELATIONS i. 5, 6.

Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

IN seeking to ascertain from Scripture the formal constitution of the Christian Church, as originally established by the apostles, our attention is naturally directed to the offices borne, or at least to the functions discharged, by those members of the Christian body whom St. Paul distinguishes under the name of “spiritual’;” persons, namely, possessing “spiritual gifts,” and discharging spiritual duties. A remarkable passage, in which the apostle enumerates and distinguishes the several “gifts,” “ministeries,” and “operations,” exhibited by different functionaries in the Church of Corinth, has already come under our review¹: and with this we may compare the language of the same apostle in his Epistle to the Ephesians. “Christ,” he observes, in reference to a remarkable prophecy of David, “when he had ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

² 1 Cor. xii. 1—31.

men. *And he gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ¹.*” Thus it appears beyond controversy, that the constitution of the apostolical Church was a gift from Christ himself, solemnly conferred upon mankind after his ascension: another proof, if any were needed, that a distinction of offices prevailed from the first, in the Christian community, by the express appointment of its Divine head; and that, for the same purposes which the ministerial economy of our own, and every other Church, is still intended to serve. And, indeed, nothing less was to be expected, for the same, or at least a similar order, was to be observed, “till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ².”

Thus far the resemblance between the Church of the apostles, and that of modern times, is perfect. The several members of the body being united together by an unseen, but most real and effectual connexion, were consequently to exhibit an outward and formal unity, as an evidence of their Christian calling, appreciable by the world, as well as by themselves. So prayed the Saviour himself. “Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are,”—that is, by a vital and mystical union. “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us: *that the world may*

¹ Eph. iv. 11, 12.

² Eph. iv. 13.

*believe that thou hast sent me*¹.” So that we can have no doubt either as to the extent or the object of this great confederacy. It is “a sensibly known company²,” including every true believer from the beginning to the end of that dispensation under which it exists; and is intended to be a witness for Christ *in the world*, through the union of all its members in one body³: a body limited neither by time nor place, yet cognizable as one and the same, in all places, and throughout all times; one in its nature, uniform in its tendencies, the same in its functions, similar in its characteristic forms. Further, with a view to general edification, that the unity of the faith, “once delivered to the saints,” might be preserved, religious knowledge increased, and heretical divisions avoided, or, as this last object is stated by the apostle, “that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lay in wait to deceive⁴,” our ascended Lord is said to have bestowed upon his Church that disposition of holy offices, and edifying ministries, to which we find such frequent allusion in the latter books of the New Testament, the groundwork of a sacred polity intended to endure till the consummation of the Christian scheme. Thus far all is clear: and when we see the Church, as it

¹ John xvii. 11, 20, 21.

² See HOOKER, book iii., sect. 3.

³ Hence is the visible Church of Christ properly defined in the Nineteenth Article, as “a congregation of faithful men,” though in the same fold with the true Israelites there be found many, in their individual character, utterly faithless. Of “the communion

of the saints” as it subsists spiritually and in the sight of God, “the world” can of course know nothing. To be a witness for Christ, it must be ostensibly represented in the sight of men, and the outward association by which this is effected is the visible Church of Christ.

⁴ Eph. iv. 14.

now appears, pursuing the same objects, by the same means; when, on a comparison of the past with the present state of religion in the world, we find that a growing acquaintance with the great “mystery of godliness” has, upon the whole, been kept up, both in individuals, and in the Church at large, by an ostensible adherence to the apostolic system; in other words, by the perpetuation of certain spiritual offices, held under a stated authority, and professedly exercised under a divine sanction;—we are encouraged in our confidence, that, though separated by a long course of years from the Church of the apostles, as it existed under their personal regulation, we are still substantially the same body, retaining the same ordinances, acting on the same principles, and occupying the same position. That the operation of this system has been grievously impeded and interrupted, as by the partial disconnexion of the Christian ministry from its spiritual head through the usurpation of the Romish pontificate, and by all the other manifestations of the same antichrist¹; so, in more modern times, by the unauthorised attempt to carry on the work of the ministry independently of any fixed or traditional order, is indeed most true, and affords an unwished-for confirmation of the general principle. These deviations assure us yet more fully that “God has *set some* in the Church,” that “Christ has given” some to his people,—ministers of holy things by special right, to whom the heavenly dispensation has been distinctly confided, and in whose hands, while they continue faithful to their trust, it will be eminently blessed. Thus far, I repeat, all is clear; but when we compare the details of the picture, as it is presented in the page of Holy Writ,

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 3—12.

with the actual state of the things as they now appear, we are struck no less with the difference, than with the similarity. In particular, the spiritual persons enumerated by St. Paul in the two passages which we have been considering, will be judged to bear other names and offices, more in number, and different in kind, than those for which in modern, and indeed in the most ancient times, subsequently to the age of the apostles, the sanction of a divine appointment is claimed.

Thus much may safely be admitted, that the Church, at the time of which we are treating, was still in a state of transition, tending indeed to that form which it was eventually intended to assume, but not yet perfectly organised¹. A Church, for instance, consisting entirely of new converts, and still under the immediate direction of an apostle, neither admitted nor required that graduated scale of divine offices, which time alone could provide, and which the removal of its inspired Founder first made indispensable. On the other hand, we need not wonder that certain *extraordinary* teachers were demanded by the exigences of a rising Church, whose duties expired when the need which created them ceased. Of this kind, in all probability, were the evangelists mentioned above². Again, the miraculous powers, of which I have already spoken, will account for several temporary arrangements³; and possibly the distinction still subsisting between the Gentile and Jewish converts, a distinction distinctly recognised by the apostles in a meeting convened to con-

¹ EPIPH. *Hæres.* l. xxv. sect. 5, p. 908, quoted in POTTER *On Church Government*, chap. iv. Οὐ γὰρ πάντα εὐθὺς ἠδυνήθησαν οἱ Ἀπόστολοι καταστήσαι, κ. τ. λ.

² In genere *Ευαγγελισταὶ* vocantur ministri quidam Ecclesiæ Christianæ, *extra ordinem et ad tempus* a Deo vocati ad prædicandum Evangelium.—SUICER. *in voc.*

³ 1 Cor. xiv.

sider this very question¹, and not obliterated till after the destruction of Jerusalem, may have been incompatible with that uniformity of discipline which ultimately prevailed. On the whole, when we take into account the scope and occasion of the several Scriptures from which we gather our notions of the infant Church, as it then appeared, while the apostles still watched over its cradle, we must freely confess, or rather solemnly urge, that if we had no other guide in the formation of our ecclesiastical polity, than the faint delineations to which I have been alluding,—were we not assisted in our interpretation of these authorities, first by certain *principles*, collected from a general study of the Sacred Volume, and secondly by certain *facts*, supplied by the Church itself historically considered,—we should be led into the most extravagant errors, as experience has repeatedly proved, both in ancient, in modern, and in recent times.

To touch for a moment upon the facts of the case, we know that, from the age immediately following the apostolic to the present time, there have been found in

¹ Acts xv. 6—31. If “the pharisees which believed” had not held themselves personally under covenant to “keep the law of Moses,”—and if this obligation had not been recognised by the apostles,—there could have been no ground for the sentence of the council, “that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned unto God.” If the Jewish converts were free, there could have been no debate respecting those of the uncircumcision. On the words, “for Moses of old time hath in every city those that preach him, being read

in the synagogues every sabbath-day,” Chrysostom remarks, *Καὶ ἵνα μὴ τις ἀνθυπενέγκῃ, διὰ τί μὴ καὶ Ἰουδαίοις τὰ αὐτὰ ἐπιστέλλομεν; ἐπήγαγε λέγων· Μωϋσῆς ἐκ γενεῶν ἀρχαίων κατὰ πόλιν τοὺς κηρύσσοντας ἑαυτὸν ἔχει· τουτέστι Μωϋσῆς αὐτοῖς διαλέγεται συνεχῶς· τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον ἀναγινωσκόμενος. Λογ. λγ.* From this it would seem that in the opinion of Chrysostom, the Jewish Christian still adhered generally to the worship of the synagogue, and to the observance of the (Jewish) sabbath.

every particular Church, of which we have any account, not merely a number of sacred offices, more or fewer; three or four of which (for if we include the order of deaconesses¹, the latter number is obtained,) have been universally believed to be of apostolic institution, while the remainder have claimed no higher authority than that of the particular Church in which they appear²; but a *sacred class*, standing in the same relation to the Church at large, as the Aaronical priesthood under the Mosaic economy, to the remainder of the Jewish people³. It is to this class that the three orders of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, as they come before us in ecclesiastical history, are to be assigned; and in this respect alone is it of any moment to inquire whether we can trace their prototypes in the sacred record. It is surely idle to draw a comparison between the officers of the Church, as they existed before and after the death of the apostles, independently of that distinction, be it what it may, which gives to the three permanent orders their peculiar character. Under the former state of things, we have apostles, prophets, and evangelists; we have those who spake with tongues, and those who interpreted them; we have those who wrought miracles, and those who healed diseases. Subsequently, we have sub-deacons,

¹ Rom. xvi. 1.

² Different churches, or the same church in different ages, had more or fewer of the inferior orders. They were not, therefore, of catholic institution.—JOHNSON'S *Vade Mccum*. vol. ii. Pref.

³ The distinction of lay and clerical is of somewhat another kind, and of rather later origin. In the primitive Church, the term

clergy was by no means confined to the three superior orders. On the contrary, it was frequently used as a general term for those ecclesiastics which were below the degree of deacon.—See the *Apostolical Canons*, *passim*, particularly the first, twelfth, and twenty-ninth. See also BINGHAM'S *Antiquities of the Christian Church*. chap. v. sect. 6, 7, and 8.

readers, singers, exorcists, acolytes, ostiaries, &c., all included under the general name of clergy, and this in the most primitive times. They are noticed by the earliest fathers (after those called apostolical¹), and are recognised by the most ancient canons of the Church. Bishops, presbyters, deacons, appear in both catalogues, and the same indeed may be said of deaconesses²; but to the three former is assigned a distinct and incommunicable character. Their offices are regarded as essential to the Church. They are believed to form a component part of the divine economy,—a necessary element in the Christian scheme. They are said to be typified by the high priest, the common priest, and the Levites of the elder dispensation³: and hence, while the remaining offices may properly vary in kind and number with the varying exigencies of the Church, these are said to be of perpetual appointment, an immutable institution of Christ himself, and, in fact, an integral part of the great evangelical scheme. Now the real question is, whether there are any grounds in Scripture for this belief.

Such, I say, are the notions which we collect from ecclesiastical history. The facts to which they correspond

¹ As Tertullian, Cyprian, and the author or authors of the (so called) *Apostolical Canons*.—See JOHNSON'S *Vade Mecum*. vol. ii. Pref. p. lxvii. Second Edit.

² It appears that this order was not everywhere abandoned before the synod of Trullus at Constantinople, anno 683.—See SUICER. in voc. *Διακόνισσα* et *ἡ Διάκονος*. Bingham contends that they were not universally suppressed till the tenth century.

³ *Τῷ γὰρ ἀρχιερεὶ ἰδίαι λειτουργίαι δεδομέναι εἰσι, καὶ*

τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν ἴδιος ὁ τόπος προστέτακται καὶ λεύταις ἰδίαι διακονίαι ἐπὶ κείνται, ὁ λαϊκὸς ἄνθρωπος τοῖς λαϊκοῖς προστάγμασιν δέδεται.—*Clem. Ep. ad Rom.* sect. xl. In utroque Testamento, docente Hieronymo, alium ordinem Pontifex tenet, et alium Sacerdotes, alium Levitæ; atque traditionibus Apostolicis de veteri lege descendentes, successerunt Episcopi, Presbyteri, et Diaconi, Aaroni, et filiis ejus, et Levitis.—COTELRIUS *in loco*.

have a certain value in themselves, in the way of evidence, of which I shall speak hereafter. They afford a presumption that a state of things which prevailed so early and so extensively, dated from the foundation of the Church. They present a phenomenon easily explained upon this supposition, and, as far as appears, upon no other. Not merely do they point to an apostolical origin, but they tend to confirm the position itself which we are mainly concerned to establish, the necessary inherence of the three sacerdotal orders in the constitution of the Christian Church, as the medium of its efficiency, the instrument of its increase, and the condition of its permanence. But at present, I make no other use of these suggestions, except to shape the course of my inquiry. My object being to compare the established order of the Church with the standard of Holy Writ, it seems necessary to draw a distinction between those duties which custom, convenience, and lawful authority, have attached particularly to the ministerial office, but which may properly be shared by Christian laymen, whether attached to the Church as ecclesiastics or not; and those for which it is expressly and peculiarly ordained.

The delicacy of this investigation, beset as it is on either side with perilous error, and hampered at every step by the ever-wakeful jealousies of opposing parties, each in possession of a vital truth, and each, it is believed, converting it into heresy, not so much by what they assert, as by what they deny,—jealousies peculiarly excited at the present moment,—is only to be equalled by its immense importance. The opinion, say rather the *faith*, of the primitive Church on this subject, as represented by the earliest fathers and most ancient councils, admits of no dispute. Whatever caution may have been requisite

in the choice of terms, while the Jewish and Pagan hierarchies subsisted, to avoid misapprehension¹, (and such caution was neither long, nor carefully observed,) we cannot detect in any ecclesiastical writer of that period, however remote, the slightest disposition to confound the apostolic ministry, or three traditional orders, with the general body of the faithful, the people, or Church at large. From the Reformation downward, on the other hand, a tendency to understate, or entirely deny, the peculiar character of the Christian ministry, has been widely manifested, both in this country, and among continental divines. Not only has the existence of any indefeasible difference between clergy and laity been denied as unfounded, but the conventional distinction between them has been reprobated as mischievous: more especially has the notion of a priestly office still subsisting in the Christian Church, in the person of any of its ministers, been denounced as an unscriptural, idolatrous, and fatal error. And the reason of this zeal is manifest. Setting aside the baser admixtures to which it may be liable, it is the form in which the reflective piety of a particular age has set itself to combat a most pernicious and directly anti-christian falsehood, long triumphant in the Church, and still in arms unvanquished and undismayed. The sacerdotal pretensions of the Romish hierarchy, in whose hands the ministerial priesthood, divested of its symbolical and representative cha-

¹ Ad testimonia patrum dico, primos Christianos, propter recentem memoriam sacerdotii Aaronici, abstinuisse non solum a vocabulo templi, sed etiam *Sacerdotii*, ne viderentur adhuc durare Judaicæ ceremoniæ. Itaque Apostoli in suis epistolis pro *Sacerdotibus*,

Episcopos et Presbyteros, pro templis ecclesias dicunt: et similiter loquuntur Justinus, Ignatius et cæteri antiquissimi patres.—BELLARMIN. *de Cult. Sanct.* lib. iii. c. 4, quoted with approbation by SUICER. *in voc.* 'Ιερεῖς.

racter, had long degenerated into a gross and demoralising superstition, naturally excited a strong re-action: and indeed such unscriptural pretences, even if they had not been associated with so much selfish ambition and unscrupulous fraud, might be too incautiously, but could not be too decidedly resisted.

Whatever else be true, the exclusive priesthood of Christ must be first proclaimed as a fundamental and necessary truth, the very groundwork of the Christian faith. There is *one* Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus¹. “By the *one* offering of himself, he hath *perfected for ever* them that are sanctified²,” and “is able to save them to the *uttermost* that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them³.” We have therefore “a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God⁴,” “in whose name” we both may and must “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need⁵.” In this high and incommunicable sense,—Christ is our only priest.

Nevertheless we are expressly assured that the priesthood is shared by every member of the Christian body. “YE also,” so writes the Apostle Peter to the Church at large, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ⁶.” And again, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.” In the language of the text, the same Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth, who loved us, and washed us from our sins in

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 5.

² Heb. x. 14.

³ Heb. vii. 25.

⁴ Heb. iv. 14.

⁵ Heb. iv. 16.

⁶ 1 Pet. ii. 5.

his own blood, the same, hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.

In another sense, therefore, (if it do not ultimately prove the same,) the Christian priesthood is the diffusive privilege and characteristic of the whole Christian Church, the inalienable right and distinction of every Christian man. To reconcile these statements, we must seek some common truth lying at the bottom of both. It is trifling with the language of revelation to assert that the word priesthood has a different meaning in the two cases. Christ is called a priest, because "he put away sin by the *sacrifice* of himself¹," and his people taken collectively, form a priesthood, because they also "offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God²." It is added "by Jesus Christ;" in his name, and through his intervention. Thus we see that the priestly function of the Saviour, and of his Church, are, in fact, identical, the latter being a direct emanation from the former. Whatever notion we form of the one must be equally applicable to the others. If then we can detect the idea which underlies both conceptions, if we can ascertain in what sense the one sacrifice and sole intercession of the second Adam constitutes a priesthood predicable of every member of the Christian family; we may expect to determine in what sense (if any) it may be said to be exercised specially by a particular description of persons, in the name of him from whom it is derived, and in behalf of those to whom it is thus generally communicated. If without derogation from the Saviour's honour, "spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God," may be offered by each and every one of his human brethren,—if all, through Christ, the representative Head of their spiritual, as the first Adam of their natural

¹ Heb. ix. 26.

² 1 Pet. ii. 5.

humanity, are partakers of this precious privilege, there is surely no impossibility, rather a high degree of probability, in the supposition, that duties, so inexpressibly important, should be committed, in special charge, to certain individuals, to be performed, with peculiar authority, in favour of all the rest. I repeat it, if the priesthood of all be compatible with the exclusive priesthood of one—if, in fact, the former be nothing else than a specific manifestation of the latter, we shall have no difficulty in perceiving in what way a particular and ministerial priesthood may co-exist and be exercised, in perfect harmony both with the one and the other.

Now it is remarkable that the very same expressions, in which the universal priesthood of the Christian Church is so emphatically declared by the apostle, had been previously applied by God himself to the Jewish people. The children of Israel, under the Mosaic dispensation, were to be “a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation’.” Yet a particular sacerdotal class was, we know, set aside by divine appointment, from among the Israelites, for the special discharge of priestly functions, and protected by the strictest sanctions². There can be, therefore, no inconsistency in a state of things, which we know to have

¹ *Exod. xix. 6.*

² And this observation will help to set another sort of persons right, who confound not only the names, but the offices of laity and clergy together; and plead that originally there was no distinction between them. The name of priesthood, indeed, is sometimes given in common to the whole body of Christian people, (1 Pet. ii. 9. Rev. i. 6,) but so it was to the Jewish people. (*Exod. xix. 6.*) “Ye shall be

unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” Yet every one knows, that the offices of the priests and Levites among the Jews, were very distinct from those of the common people, not by usurpation, but by God’s appointment. And so it was among Christians, from the first foundation of the Church. —See BINGHAM’S *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, book I. chap. v. sect. iv.

actually existed, and this by the express enactment of God: rather we may expect to find its several provisions indissolubly connected, as the issues of a common cause.

But we may go further. Having ascertained the relation in which the Jewish and Christian Churches, each pointedly characterized as “a royal priesthood,” stand to each other, generally, we cannot fail to collect the true correspondency that exists between their several parts. This relation, if I mistake not, is determined by their dependance on a common head.

To touch for a moment upon the elder dispensation, there is no point insisted upon with more force and urgency in the Apostolic Scriptures, than the inefficiency of the Mosaic law, considered as a system of ritual observances, to take away sin. A single instance will suffice: “Let no man, therefore, judge you” (thus we read in St. Paul’s Epistle to the Colossians) “in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holiday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days. Which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is Christ¹.” In themselves these observances were merely valuable as indicative of future blessings: but in Christ they had a substantive reality, and to the faithful we cannot doubt but that they verily and indeed communicated a portion of “grace and truth.” For so St. Paul expressly declares to the Corinthians: “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized under Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same *spiritual* meat; and did all drink the same *spiritual* drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: *and that Rock was Christ*².”

¹ Col. ii. 16, 17.

² 1 Cor. x. 1—4.

And in thus deeming, not merely of the Mosaic ritual, but of every portion of Jewish history, the sacred writers under the new dispensation, did no more than develope and enforce what had already been distinctly avowed by the Old Testament prophets themselves. Thus the inspired author of the fortieth Psalm, as quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin hadst thou no pleasure. Then said I, Lo I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God¹."

Thus we see that the law had, indeed, a shadow of good things to come, though not the very image of the things. And from what substance was that shadow cast, if not from Immanuel ever present with his elect people, and effectually operative, though unseen; ever present with power in those types and figures, under which he lay concealed, "till the day of his shewing to Israel²," and perpetually converting them from carnal to spiritual? Shadows, indeed, they still remained, till life and immortality were brought to light in the Gospel: yet were they pledges of a mysterious relationship, between the Angel of the Covenant and the chosen people of his inheritance, the nature of which they obscurely, yet certainly, intimated. Pledges they were, and symbols, in a sense approaching to sacramental, of that indwelling³ of the redeeming God⁴, of which the incarnation of the filial Godhead, in the person of the ever blessed Jesus, is at once a manifestation, a fulfilment, and an everlasting assurance, to all that believe on his name.

It is this mysterious, but most real and effectual

¹ Heb. x. 4—7.

² Exod. xxix. 45. Deut. xii. 11.

³ Luke i. 80.

⁴ Psalm lxxiv. 2.

relationship, between the Head of the Church and his people in every age, that constitutes “the children of promise” a holy nation, and a royal priesthood. Inheriting from the first Adam a polluted, servile, and death-stricken nature¹, ashamed of their nakedness, afraid of communion with God, and, in fact, driven forth from his presence²; so from the second Adam, by adoption into the family of God, they become partakers of the divine nature, “having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust³.” In a word, they become “partakers of Christ⁴.” “Both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren⁵.”

Thus the divine image is restored⁶, and man reappears in his original sovereignty⁷. If Christ be a king⁸, and “the Prince of the kings of the earth⁹,” so has he “given a kingdom” to his human brethren: a kingdom, let it be freely avowed, or rather zealously asserted, in which they all share: all potentially, with the means, blessed be God! of actual participation, not simply within their reach, but perpetually courting their acceptance, and co-operation. He “has made us kings for ever unto God and his Father—kings and priests¹⁰.” If, in the language of St. Paul to the Ephesians, “Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour¹¹,” so we are commanded and encouraged to “present *our* bodies, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our [reasonable service¹²].” If “He ever liveth to make intercession for

¹ Rom. v. 12.⁴ Heb. iii. 14.⁷ Gen. i. 28.¹⁰ Rev. i. 6.² Gen. iii. 7, 8, 24.⁵ Heb. ii. 11.⁸ John xviii. 37.¹¹ Eph. v. 2.³ 2 Pet. i. 4.⁶ Gen. i. 27.⁹ Rev. i. 5.¹² Rom. xii. 1.

us,"—so *our* prayers and intercessions are to be made for all men'. And "the prayer of a righteous man," we are told, "availeth much^a." Thus, through Christ, every Christian man is a priest for himself, his family, and his neighbours. He offers up himself, his prayers, and his services, his charitable deeds, and his alms'. More particularly he offers up his body, in what high sense, and in what manners, may more fitly be discussed, so far as this awful mystery may be reverently and discreetly handled, when we come to treat of the great symbolical rite in which (among other holy uses) this living sacrifice, as performed, on our behalf, by the great High Priest of our profession, is specifically commemorated and represented.

Of these precious privileges, God forbid that we should deprive a single member of the Christian body'.

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 1.

² James v. 16.

³ Heb. xiii. 16.

⁴ "Earnestly then, may we implore you, the youngest not least, that you try steadily to impress on your minds your Christian privileges and responsibilities; for the two ever go together. Each one of you is called by Christ himself, to come unto God by him; not to look out for another to stand between you and Christ. The aid of Christian ministers is variously granted: it may well happen that some of those who hear me may, in the events of life, be placed in situations where this aid may be denied them; they may either be out of the reach of any minister, as has been the case sometimes abroad, or circumstances may hinder them from deriving any benefit from him. But remember, that wherever Christian ministers

may be, you are never without God, and never without your great High Priest, through whom, every day and every hour, you may have access to God. Prayer is yours, and yours is the promise of the Spirit, and yours is the blood of the covenant; and what do you need more? These are yours to use for your salvation, or to forfeit for your ruin: you may not decline the trust committed to you, for God has given you his own Son to be your Priest and Mediator, and he will not have you, like the idolators of old, seek after one of man's devising^a."

There is nothing in the *words* of this passage, though my views are opposed to the *implied* meaning, and practical tendency, in which I do not fully concur. It is not, indeed, easy to conceive any circum-

^a ARNOLD'S *Sermons*, vol. iii. p. 141. Sermon XI. "Christ our only Priest."

They form individually and collectively "a royal priesthood," and are so accounted, and dealt with, in the most ancient formularies of the Church. If the priest inter-

stances, apart from his own fault, or folly, by which a man can be hindered in this country, from deriving *any* benefit from the lawfully ordained ministry of God's Holy Word, and Sacraments, through which (to say no more) the privilege of common prayer, and Christian communion, in its most solemn form, is held out to him. Sickness, penury, and destitution, the prison itself, rarely leaves any one out of reach of ministering comfort and assistance. Or, if for a while an individual were so circumstanced, yet a *perpetual* exclusion from the services of the Church, is a contingency barely possible. But grant that it were otherwise. The indispensable *necessity* of an established ministry in the Church, and the strict *obligation* lying upon individuals to avail themselves of their various services, is no more invalidated by supposable cases, in which such observance would be impossible, (from whatever cause, moral or physical, the hinderance may arise,) than the similar necessity of sacraments, *where they can be had*, is rendered questionable by the reference so frequently made, to the case of those who, without any fault of their own, are deprived of their use^a. The good fathers (*duri patres infantium*) who suffered themselves to be tossed upon the horns of this dilemma, and who,

^a HOOKER, *Eccles. Pol.* V. LX. 6, 7, LXI. 1; BULL, *Apologia, per Harmonia*, p. 650; where the necessity of external baptism is asserted, with the limitation, *ubi haberi potest*.

through fear of a latitudinarian concession, impaled themselves with awless intrepidity on the terrible alternative, (the eternal damnation of unbaptized infants,) might have asserted their consistency without being driven to so monstrous a conclusion. That which is of *absolute* necessity to the body, may be of no more than relative and conditional necessity to the individual member.

Hence, in speaking of others, we form no positive conclusion, either in regard to their conduct, or to their fate: we speak conditionally; and incline, whenever possible, to a charitable opinion—hoping sometimes against hope. In speaking *to* others, our injunctions assume a stricter tone. To the Church at large we say they are indispensable, and on what grounds do you claim *your* exemption? while in relation to ourselves, this last shade of hesitation vanishes. Are they necessary for *me*? Assuredly yes.

In thus referring to the line of opinion advocated in these beautiful Sermons, my object is far other than that of registering my reluctant dissent. Though I take a different view of the Christian ministry, from that of the author, and deprecate the practical tendency of some of his remarks, I venture to hope that the fundamental difference between us is more apparent than real; that, in fact, the orthodox doctrine, (if without intentional presumption I

cedes for the people, the people intercede, in their turn, for the priest.

Yet if a priesthood, thus co-extensive with the Christian name, be not merely consistent with the relation subsisting between Christ and his Church, but a necessary proof and consequence of that relation, the Son of man, who is God, having *thus* made his human brethren partakers of himself, how can it be shown that a particular priesthood, specially charged with the sacerdotal office,—a representative order, exemplifying, and, if I may so express myself, actualizing, in a given direction, and with express solemnity, that which exists, as we have seen, diffusively in the Church at large,—is not a further

may employ this phrase in a technical sense) is not really open to the objection which he has stated with so much clearness, and urged with so much force. God forbid that like the idolators, whether of ancient or of modern times, we should seek for any priesthood but that of our anointed Saviour. Christ, whether his priestly office be regarded as diffused over his Church, or as specially set forth and asserted by a peculiar order of men, is still “our only Priest.” For *all* our gifts and graces are his, and emphatically this of the priesthood; and if there be any spiritual life in the priest’s function, it is not he, but Christ that liveth in him. And this, in a certain sense, is true of every Christian man. If, however, we acknowledge further a *special* ministry and stewardship of these divine mysteries, we count it neither of man’s seeking, nor of man’s devising. We believe that Christ

has “set some in the Church” over this business: and these it has been our happiness, as it was that of our fathers, to find. In the high moral aim, and in the fearless appeals to conscience and reason, by which these Sermons are distinguished, I would offer the humble tribute of my entire sympathy, in the deep conviction of my heart, that conscience, reason, and Scripture, are but different keys of the same divine instrument, tuned to the finest harmony, and revealing, each in its proportion, the same heavenly music.

Thus much in explanation of my own views, and as a satisfaction to my own feeling, lest I should be thought to challenge controversy with a writer, from whose judgment, if I differ, it is with unaffected diffidence, and on such a subject, not without many “searchings of heart.”

proof and exhibition of the same pregnant truth? Why should it be thought incredible, or unlikely, that so all-important a function of the *new man*, though the vital energy on which it depends exist entire and undivided in the Head of the Church, should not only permeate the entire body, but likewise be furnished with a peculiar organization? Is this to derogate from the supremacy of our great High Priest, and not rather, in His own good way, to set it forth and make it effectual? What if those light and life-giving powers, which are truly included in Christ Himself as their focal source,—the sun, glorious and imparting glory, of that doomed and dying world of man, which He appeared in the lower firmament, to vivify and brighten,—and yet are diffused through the wide and ever-widening sphere of His influence, should be specially reflected and dispensed by inferior luminaries that shine, as they move in their set courses, with a light borrowed from Him, whom they are made to symbolize; Himself, as he was seen of men, a symbol and declarative image¹ of that omnipresent Light, at once the centre and circumference of the universe², “which no man hath seen or can see³:” I say, a *reflected* light; but the language of metaphor is necessarily defective. Christ in His Church is *everywhere* a centre of spiritual influence; and the priesthood, however manifested, is not a mere type of the Saviour’s office, presenting the form, but unattended with the power; not a cold reflection ruling the night, in the absence of the sun of glory; it is rather to be accounted as the effectual presence of Christ Himself, whether in the midst of His congregation collectively, or as specially asserted on particular occasions, and in a determinate

¹ John i. 18.; Heb. i. 2.

² 1 Kings viii. 27.; Ephes. i. 23.

³ 1 Tim. vi. 16.

manner. And this, as might be expected, closely connects the nature of the sacerdotal office with that of the Christian sacraments. They are types, indeed, for they are visible representations of an unseen mystery; but not *mere* types: that “real presence”—which, in a certain sense, is universally predicable of the visible body in which Immanuel has covenanted to dwell—is herein expressly recognised and asserted. And although it is the instinct of piety to repeat this process in various ways, whereby a sacramental character is communicated to every form of devotion, and, indeed, to all the outer world of man as seen by the eye of faith, yet a marked and pre-eminent sanctity is given to those appointments, which carry with them the sanction of an express appointment.

Now that which is true of the indwelling Christ universally, is true of his priesthood in particular. It resides effectually in every “partaker of the heavenly calling¹,” but it is specifically represented by a peculiar order of men, in whom it is set forth with power. And this is in analogy with the entire scheme of revelation, as concerning the fall and redemption of man. The whole is set forth in symbols constituting a regular and progressive system; and these are not mere *forms* unconnected with the *realities* which they announce, but real instances and exemplifications of that which they typify. Thus, to take a single instance, the first man, besides his individual and historical existence, is revealed to us as the representative of the entire human race; so that that which is true of all, is eminently true of him; not inclusively, but as the prototype and example of all the rest². And “as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive³.” That which in a high and incommunicable

¹ Heb. iii. 1.² Rom. v. 12.³ 1 Cor. xv. 22.

sense is predicable of the great "Captain of our salvation¹," is, nevertheless, asserted of all His followers. "They are crucified with Christ, nevertheless they live²;" "Having been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection³." Upon which we may observe, that these and the like declarations, besides the moral lessons which they teach, and the religious hopes which they convey, exhibit sublime doctrinal truths, and are to be understood literally as well as metaphorically.

That the whole framework of the Jewish polity was typical is allowed on all hands; but, though typical, it surely participated in the blessings which it foreshadowed. Thus, to recur to the particular point under discussion, when Jehovah told the children of Israel, that they should be unto him a kingdom of priests, though the high distinction thus conferred upon them belongs, in an exclusive sense, to that "seed of Abraham in whom all nations should be blessed," we cannot doubt that they were invested in their own persons with a substantial privilege. "They had much advantage every way⁴." But more particularly the person and offices of the Messiah were set forth in the three sacerdotal orders; and what are we to think of these? Must we not conclude that while they symbolized a great mystery, as yet no otherwise revealed in the Church than by prophetic hints and dark indications—the redemption, namely, of mankind, by the union of the Godhead with the manhood,—they were still the appointed mean by which that divine and blessed truth was working, unseen indeed, but most effectually, for the present and future benefit of all

¹ Heb. ii. 10.

² Rom. vi. 5.

³ Gal. ii. 29.

⁴ Rom. iii. 1, 2.

mankind? And if the priesthood were nothing else but a specific operation of the indwelling Immanuel (though this mystery was as yet unrevealed), we can surely discern how it might both exist in the people at large, and yet be peculiarly exercised, under given conditions, by those to whom this ministry was authoritatively assigned. We know that it was so : and hence, when Korah asserted that all the congregation were holy, *and that the Lord was among them*, he spake no more than the truth. Yet when he inferred from this, that Moses and Aaron took too much upon them,—when they murmured against Aaron in particular, and sought to exercise the priesthood in their own persons,—they were judged guilty of rebellion, and perished in their gainsaying¹.

But it will be said, that these were merely “shadows of good things to come :” and this is most true. “Life and immortality,” though the expected portion of the Lord’s people in every age, “were not yet brought to light by the Gospel.” We have now “the very image of the things².” And this fixed the distinction between the external provisions of the Church, before and after the coming of Christ in the flesh. That which before was a *shadow*, or a dark intimation, is now “the very image,” or express and manifest revelation. The shadow was nothing, apart from the substance to which it pointed ; and the image is nothing, apart from the reality which it represents, and of which it is the visible form. But as the case really stood, the shadow was a precious token of the blessings which it adumbrated ; and, so long as the life of the system is preserved, the “very image” which is now “set forth among us,” is nothing less than an exhibition of the same blessings, fully made known, and

¹ Numbers xvi. ; Jude 11.

² Heb. x. 1.

actually enjoyed; is nothing less than Christ himself, the manifested Word of Life¹, “whom God hath given to be head over all things to his Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all².”

Thus, the two dispensations, as I have observed on a former occasion, (Sermon I.) have a vital correspondency; the former darkly signifying that which the latter has openly declared. To set forth Christ, and in Him to produce and cherish a vital principle of holiness in the souls of men, is the common intent of both; in the one case by prophetic shadows, in the other case by distinct commemoration and express acknowledgment. We may, therefore, expect to find that the machinery, with which each is provided, partakes both of the general similarity and the particular modification of the end proposed. We may expect to find the enigmatical language of the Jewish ceremonial translated into the clear and explicit eloquence of Christian devotion. By what steps the sensible organization of the Christian Church grew out of the Mosaic framework, is matter of historical investigation. My present subject confines me to a single point, to which I shall now, in conclusion, briefly recur.

We have seen that a sacerdotal character is assigned in Scripture to the covenanted people of God, both before and after the coming of Christ. They are entitled “a royal priesthood;” they are “made kings and priests for ever, to God and the Father.” Notwithstanding, we know that in the Jewish Church there existed a particular class, exercising the priestly office, with a peculiar sanction; and we know, likewise, that in the Christian Church there has existed from primitive, if not from apostolic, times, (which is the question under debate,) a

¹ 1 John i. 12.

² Ephes. i. 23.

regular ministry, standing in a peculiar relation to the Church at large, and apparently corresponding to the three orders of the Jewish priesthood. And this analogy might of itself lead us to infer, that there is no necessary incongruity in such an order of things. As the priesthood of the Jewish congregation reappears, with all the freshness of a spiritual transfiguration, in that of the Christian Church, so we might anticipate that the ministry of the one would pass into the other, with a like divine change. But when we consider, further, the nature of this priesthood, that it is nothing but the perpetual mediation of Christ Himself, the immanent WORD, variously set forth and symbolized, we are now on our road to an *idea*, by which, if I mistake not, every seeming contradiction is explained and harmonized. We see in what way a ministering priesthood, established under certain conditions, both in the Jewish and Christian Churches, is not merely compatible with the diffusive priesthood of the people, but asserts and enforces it; is not merely reconcileable with the sole sacrifice, and exclusive mediation of "the forerunner" "within the veil," but an appointed mean through which it is effectually acknowledged, and kept in continual remembrance. In every case it is the utterance of the new man, the spiritual Adam, communing with the Father of our spirits, to whom, as sons, we have access with boldness, and pleading the meritorious death and passion of that sinless Saviour, "by whom the world is crucified to us, and we to the world." For "the first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also which are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also which are heavenly. And

as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly¹.”

The notions which I have here endeavoured to develop, are of very extensive application. In particular they will serve to show, how it has come to pass that the term Church is so often used, apparently in an exclusive sense, as synonymous with the Clergy. I say, *apparently*, in an exclusive sense; for in reality the people at large are included in the Clergy, as their representatives. Thus, we see that there is a Church representative, as well as a Church diffusive. The latter, it is evident, though a body truly existing in the world, can only be recognised as an idea. It *exists* in all places, and in all times; and, in order to invest it with a tangible form, without which it cannot stand in any practical relation to its individual members, we must find something to stand in its place, not as a substitute, but as a representative symbol; an integral part, exhibiting for special purposes the power and spirit of the whole. Now, the Church diffusive is represented, in one point of view, by the collective Churches existing at a given time throughout the world; and these again, for a given object, may be represented by a general council, or assembly of delegates. And both of these must, under certain limitations, be practically regarded as the Church itself. But in its clergy, and more especially in the clergy, considered as an official, or ministering priesthood, the Church is provided with a perpetual representation involved in its original structure, and consequently co-extensive with itself. The clergy then are essentially a *representative* body; and this in the very highest behoof, seeing that they are appointed to represent the people in their relations to the throne of

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 47—49,

grace. It is in this light alone that the clergy can ever, without gross impropriety, be identified with the Church. That this distinction is often misunderstood, yea, that it has not seldom been kept out of sight for secular ends, cannot be denied, and need not be concealed. Which of God's appointments has not been similarly *perrverted*? Whenever the possession of any power or privilege is claimed, on the part of a particular order, not virtually existing in the Church at large, such claim is indeed an usurpation, the fruitful parent of idolatrous superstitions, and the most degrading spiritual servitude. But that those powers and privileges which, emanating from the Head of the Church, and circulating through every part of the body, are the precious inheritance of every regenerate man, of every member of Christ's visible Church, *in respect of* his baptism and profession; that these, by divine appointment, should be specially exercised by a particular class, in whose office and ministry they are expressly symbolized and exemplified, this provision is not merely, as I have above attempted to illustrate, in analogy with the whole scheme of revelation, but of the clearest benefit and necessity.

But for this wholesome, this indispensable economy,—those vital truths which involve the eternal well-being of man,—his adoption through Christ into a new and spiritual nature and restored communion with the eternal source of light and life, involving the sacrifice of the old man, the degraded “image of the earthly”—would exist at best as mere philosophical dogmas, neither explicitly believed, nor generally remembered. The faith of the world would still slumber, or, if roused to activity, as in fact it ever must be, would ally itself to the vilest shapes of falsehood, or the foulest perversions of truth. But when the heavenly

aspirations, by which the diviner soul is animated, as she struggles to free herself from the “body of this death,” are called forth into stated and distinct exercise,—when we are taught to associate spiritual truths with common forms, and daily acts,—when we attribute to a separate order of men the deliberate exercise of those new-born faculties which belong to us as sons of God, and recognise on particular occasions, by a conscious effort of the will, the peculiar presence of the incarnate God,—not merely are our devotional feelings stimulated, and our faith matured, but that insight into the eternal world, which must else have remained a shadowy speculation, the exclusive property of a few speculative minds, becomes the substantial possession of every individual member of the Christian flock, and, by every one “that is of an humble spirit,” may substantially be enjoyed.

Thus far of the nature of the priesthood in general, and of the clergy, as a representative body. In my next Sermon I shall speak more particularly of their several orders.

SERMON XI.

THE SAINTS, OR THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AS DELINEATED IN THE APOSTOLIC SCRIPTURES.

PART III.—THE APOSTOLIC COMMISSION.

JOHN xx. 21.

Then said Jesus unto them again, Peace be unto you : as my Father sent me, so send I you.

IN my last Sermon I spoke of the ministerial office in general, and of the clergy as contrasted with the lay members of the Church. It was my object to show that the peculiar character, which has always been attributed to the administrative portion of the Church, neither derogates from the exclusive attributes of its great Head, nor interferes with the diffusive privileges of the body at large. It is strictly representative, both in respect of Christ Himself, and of the Christian flock ; implying both in the one, and in the other, (in the former as originating, in the latter as imputed,) the presence of those powers and privileges which are thus expressly set forth and asserted ; a particular class of persons, being separated by divine appointment from the rest of their brethren, for this object, and to this extent, *but no further*. Thus the Christian minister supports a twofold character. As an individual “partaker of the heavenly calling” he differs in no respect from his fellows. In that Sion none are before or after another ; all are co-equal in the possession of rights ; say rather in the enjoyment of blessings, which

cannot be increased, and may not be diminished. Whatever regulation, therefore, appears to place one class of individuals in their relations to the throne of grace, upon a peculiar footing in the “assembly of the saints¹,” must be regarded as heretical and anti-Christian; and hence the just reclamation of the English and other reformed Churches, against the denial of the sacramental cup to the laity, as practised in the Romish communion².

But again, as a “minister of the New Testament³” “and steward of the manifold grace of God⁴,” the officiating person is placed on an eminence, not merely to preach the Gospel, which is in some sort the duty of every Christian, but to represent and symbolize its vital truths, in the same way as the sacramental symbols, the water of regeneration, and the life-sustaining bread and wine; the former being an image of the Christian *man*, the latter of the spiritual *faith*, by which he lives; the *very* image, that is to say, the thing itself expressly set forth and exemplified. Nay, the minister of holy things *appears* in this double capacity, even while exercising his peculiar functions, as may be observed in the Church Service throughout; and very remarkably in that most solemn office, when he “first receives the communion in both kinds himself, and then proceeds to deliver the same to the bishops, priests, and deacons, in like manner (if any be present), and after to the people in order⁵.” His administrations have a reflex operation upon himself, in common both with the people, and others of his own order, without the smallest distinction, or pre-eminence of the one part over the other.

¹ Psalm LXXXIX. 7.

⁴ 1 Pet. iv. 10.

² Art. xxx.

⁵ Rubric in the Communion Service.

³ 2 Cor. iii. 6.

I likewise attempted to show, that this symbolical method, by which a part is brought forward to represent the whole, characterizes the entire scheme of outward religion, as revealed both in the Old and New Testaments; the Jewish priesthood, as consisting with the priesthood of the people at large, and with the secret but solely effectual energy of the indwelling Immanuel, the Lord, who was among them, being a conspicuous and most instructive instance. In conclusion, I briefly pointed out the apparent necessity and advantage of such an economy. Coming with these views to a consideration of the facts of the case, as exhibited in the actual constitution of the Church, both past and present, we see much to solicit our admiration, nothing to excite our surprise. We seem to discern the working of an uniform plan in different stages of development, while we invalidate the only plausible objections to this statement, by proving them to be misapplied.

It will not be sufficient, however, to rest the argument either upon the antecedent probability, or apparent reasonableness of the existing state of things. We must evince that the ministerial economy of the Church, in its main features, is derived from the *express* authority of its divine Head, and must bring the question of fact to a trial of evidence.

In a word, we must examine the commission under which the first teachers of Christianity were empowered to disciple and baptize the nations; we must investigate its nature and determine its extent. And, as we have approached this inquiry by a consideration of the ministerial office in general, so we shall be further qualified to appreciate the intention of the several acts by which, as we shall find, it was originally conferred, if we first

examine the nature of the office somewhat more in detail, with a particular reference to that tripartite division which it actually exhibits in the Church.

For this examination we have, I trust, been in some degree prepared, by the twofold idea of the Church presented in a former discourse, first, as the kingdom, secondly, as the living body of Christ.

To the former of these I would refer the pastorate,—the clergy, in their pastoral functions, feeding and guiding the flocks over which they have the rule¹, whether on a smaller or a larger scale, in parishes or in dioceses, singly or in council; in which capacity they constitute a formal administration, giving to the Church the character of a regular polity.

With the latter we naturally associate the priesthood, the sacerdotal office generally, and the clergy in that respect, “as ministers and stewards of” sacred “mysteries,” “rightly and duly administering the” divine “word and sacraments;” in a word, as appointed organs, whereby the life-giving operations of the Spirit are kept up in the Christian body, communion between the members maintained, and the relation in which they stand to their unseen Head continually recognised, cherished, and upheld.

But as it pleased the divine “Author and Finisher of our faith”² neither to establish His kingdom, nor complete His voluntary sacrifice, till the close of his earthly ministry,—as a preparatory period of warning, instruction, and moral training, was deemed necessary, during which He appears rather as “the Prophet of his Church,” than as its Priest or King; a period, moreover, of humiliation and affectionate lowly service on the part both of our

¹ Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 21.

² Communion Service.

³ Heb. xii. 2.

Lord and His chosen witnesses,—the office of the clergy comes before us in a third point of view, as a ministry: more particularly as a ministry of religious admonition and education, introductory, so to speak, to a complete investiture in the higher privileges of our profession. Thus, we are led to contemplate the Christian ministry in three points of view.

First, as a pastorate, appointed to tend, to feed, and overlook the flock of Christ; to teach, to legislate, and govern, in accordance with certain fixed principles in the visible Church.

Secondly, as a priesthood, authorized and empowered to perform those sacred functions, according to a determinate and invariable order, by which the Church, considered as a mystical society, visibly embodied, is perpetuated and sustained; by which its members are recruited, its spiritual life manifested, and its necessary organization preserved.

Lastly, as a ministry, properly so called,—a holy service, appointed to “wait at the altar” in the courts of the Lord’s house, and minister to the necessities of his people.

If this distinction be grounded upon a just idea of the ministerial office, it will follow that the Christian minister, in addition to his general character as a servant of the Church, is at one and the same time a pastor and a priest. In the first capacity, he takes his place in the Church, considered as a kingdom, and derives his authority from Christ in His kingly, that is to say, His pastoral character. For what is a king but a shepherd of his people? Our Lord speaks of Himself as “the good

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 13.

² The Homeric phrase, *ποιμένα* | *λαῶν*, applied to the regal office, has been repeatedly noticed.

Shepherd¹” and says of His Church that “there shall be one fold and one Shepherd².” He is named by St. Paul, ‘that great Shepherd of the sheep³,’ and by St. Peter, “the chief Shepherd⁴ ;” from which expressions alone we might infer, that the pastoral functions of the Saviour had already devolved upon certain of His servants,—subordinate pastors,—overseers who ruled, elders who fed, and inferior ministers who assisted in tending the Christian flock.

But our blessed Lord is further said to have been appointed “Head over all things to the Church, which is His *body*, the fulness of him that filleth all in all⁵ :” and in this relation He is more particularly manifested as an High Priest over the house of God⁶.” And if the “chief Shepherd” have shepherds under Him, representing Him in his pastoral offices, without interference with His sovereign power, or any derogation to His honour; so, in another character, as “the great Apostle and High Priest of our profession⁷,” His appointed ministers are taught to consider Jesus Christ as their great exemplar and heavenly prototype. In His name, and under His authority, the bishop lays hands on those by whom he is to be assisted and succeeded in his spiritual stewardship. In His name, and by virtue of His express commission, the priest blesses, breaks, and distributes those holy symbols of his body, which, in this way, are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful: in His name, and in obedience to His commands, the deacon performs that solemn initiative rite, by which we are “all baptized into one body,” or, as St. Paul elsewhere expresses it, “into

¹ John x. 14.² John x. 16.³ Heb. xiii. 20.⁴ 1 Pet. v. 4.⁵ Ephes. i. 22, 23.⁶ Heb. x. 21.⁷ Heb. iii. 1.

Christ¹," the right and power to perform these sacred functions, according to the institution of Christ, and in reliance upon His precious promises, giving to the Christian priesthood its incommunicable and indefeasible character.

That these statements are in effect supported by the voice of the Church throughout the world, from the earliest period that it can be ascertained, needs no proof; and if any doubt remain with regard to the English Church, as at present constituted, her Liturgy and Articles speak a language too plain to be mistaken, and too strong to be disregarded. Not only is Episcopal ordination strictly required, but a marked distinction is preserved between the two inferior orders. To consecrate the elements of bread and wine for sacramental communion, and to pronounce absolution on the conditions of the Gospel, with ministerial "power and authority," is reserved to the priests, while baptism, but only by an authority delegated from the bishop, may be administered by a deacon. And this distinction pre-supposes a corresponding *difference*, not created by the human enactment, but the ground and justification of it. On any other supposition, such an enactment were either wholly unmeaning, or to be explained by a sophistry at once trifling and profane, the occasion of just scandal, or of gross superstition. Besides, as the great divines, by whom the administrative Church in this country was re-modelled, not only retained, but studiously sought out the forms of elder times—forms, at least in their essential import, of primitive and catholic usage—we are pointedly referred, so far as these are concerned, to primitive and catholic interpretation. But what are the *ultimate* grounds of this doctrine? Is it not merely agreeable to the dictates of

¹ Gal. iii. 27.

reason, and the demands of conscience, but actually revealed in Scripture?

In order to answer this question in the affirmative, it will, I think, be necessary to establish the following positions.

First, that the functions, severally ascribed to the ministerial office, whether contemplated as a pastorate, or as a priesthood, or simply as a ministry of the word, were sustained by our blessed Lord Himself; in the first case as the Ruler of His people, in the second as the Well-spring of that life, by which they are actuated as a mystical incorporation; while His earthly sojourn in the humble form of a servant naturally connects itself with the third¹.

Secondly, that these functions not merely arrange themselves naturally under three heads, corresponding to the episcopate, presbytery, and diaconate of the historical Church, but that they were actually assumed, and exercised by our Lord Himself in such a manner and in such an order as to present a divine example of every separate degree, and an unquestionable precedent of the economy hereafter to be established in the Church.

Lastly, that these degrees were severally and successively delegated to the apostles, in each case by an express commission, addressed to them in their official character, and extending to their lawful successors.

The first of these positions requires no proof. Whatever we understand by the pastoral or sacerdotal function, with all the power, authority, or ability which it requires and implies, will readily be ascribed to Him, who

¹ See MR. MAURICE'S Sixth Letter in his *Kingdom of Christ*, a work to which I have already had occasion to refer with feelings of high admiration and grateful acknowledgment.

is emphatically styled the fulness of His Church and people; to Him, and in a certain sense, to Him alone; “for without Him we can do nothing.” The general assertion of St. Paul, “I live, yet *not* I, but Christ liveth in me¹,” (words that describe the state of every regenerate man,) applies particularly to the Christian minister. If there be any living efficacy in his ministrations, it is not he, but Christ that dwelleth in him. He does no more than represent, for a given object, that universal presence of Christ in his Church, which is the fountain of all spiritual graces, and which, however it be set forth, or applied, is *realized* by faith alone.

With regard to the second point, it has been repeatedly noticed, that our Saviour, though announced to His Church from old time as their Prophet, Priest, and King, and, although on His coming into the world He was doubtless received in all these characters by some, to whom it was “given to know the mysteries of God,” did not enter at once upon the full exercise of these functions, but as He had emptied Himself of that glory which He had with the Father before all worlds, so in re-ascending to the same pre-eminence, it was His will to pass through several gradations, as well of duty as of honour, in that all things He might be a pattern to them that believe. It is not indeed to be supposed, that the Son of God has not always stood in one and the same relation to His Church. “As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.” But He has been pleased to manifest Himself to the world gradually, and as it were by successive developements, each attended by circumstances of marked solemnity, and forming a distinct epoch in the mediatorial scheme.

¹ Gal. ii. 20.

The first of these dates from His baptism, when He was proclaimed the Son of God, and received the unction of the Spirit. He now enters upon his public ministry, but in the low estate of a servant. As He said of Himself, "I am among you as one that serveth¹." This is the period of his voluntary humiliation, when he was made "a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death²;" and, accordingly, its conclusion is determined by His own awful words on the cross, "It is finished!"

The second state of existence which the Saviour, after His union with the manhood, deigned to assume, is limited to the forty days which He passed on earth after His resurrection, when *all power was given Him in heaven and on earth*. The atoning sacrifice was now complete; and though from the brevity of the sacred narrative, and the mysterious nature of the subject, it becomes us to speculate with much reserve, on the nature of the change discernible in the demeanour of our risen Lord, we are fully warranted in referring to this period the manifestation of the Redeemer in a new and most important character, as the Mediator of the new covenant, and Priest unchangeable, who ever liveth to make intercession for His people.

And now it only remained for the Saviour to take upon Himself the full exercise of His kingly functions, to fulfil all that had been written, and to bring to perfection the great mediatorial scheme. He ascended to heaven, and was set down³ by God Himself on His own right hand, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come," "Who put all

¹ Luke xxii. 27.

² Heb. ii. 9.

things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church¹."

During the first of these periods, we recognize a dispensation of prophecy as fulfilled in Christ, "that" greater "Prophet,"—"meek and lowly in heart"²—of whom we have a type, first in Moses, by whom also His coming in this character had been expressly foretold³; and, secondly, by all "the servants of God," whose office had been to instruct the Lord's people, and declare to them the will of heaven. Of the functions arising out of this divine order, the leading idea is a revelation, coupled with lowly service, on the part of those by whom it is promulgated; an idea represented generally in the ministry of the word, but more particularly in the office of deacon, or minister, emphatically so named, the first degree of the Christian ministry.

With the second epoch commences the mediatorial dispensation, as foreshadowed in the sacrifices of the law, but realized in Christ alone, our great and only High Priest, typified specially by Aaron, but in a lower sense by all the Levitical orders, and by each in its own proportion. To this belong all spiritual gifts and benefits, both general and particular. Its leading idea is to be sought in the doctrine of a new birth, and the indwelling of Christ in the regenerate man, from which the essential unity of the Church is a necessary result. From the same source, flow the several doctrines of a sacrificial atonement, redemption, and justification. This idea is represented generally in the ministry of the sacraments, or in the priesthood, but more particularly in the presbytery, or second ministerial order.

¹ Ephes. i. 21, 22.

² John i. 21; Matt. xi. 29.

³ Deut. xviii. 15; compare xxxiv. 10.

Lastly, we see a dispensation of Christian government, corresponding to the kingship of Messiah. Whatever of lawful power, or genuine majesty, has at any time existed among the Lord's people, (imperfect shadows at best, and only venerable, only beneficial, when referred to that heavenly substance from which they are cast,) the earthly vessel in which they are contained, constitutes an image of him "by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice," an image, in respect of such *lawful* power and genuine majesty. Not kings alone, but every depository of the sacred power of law, every person in whom the majesty of nations is represented, point to him in whom alone is realized the sovereignty of man. As all the powers under which man unites with man in mutual intercourse and social covenant, not as impelled by a mere gregarious instinct, but in virtue of his common humanity—households, or families, or clans, or nations—are symbols of that Church, into which they must ultimately be resolved; so all the persons in whom the ideal unity of this association is implied—Father, or head, or chief, or king—symbolize, to a certain extent, that King of kings, from whom their powers are derived, say rather, in whom alone they exist, in so far as they are lawful, and thus far "holy, just, and good." If, however, we look for a particular and eminent type of Christ, in his kingly office, such a type we have in David, the anointed king of Israel, and "man after God's own heart".

Of this last and crowning dispensation, the leading idea is law—represented generally in the Church by all lawfully constituted authority, but more particularly by the episcopate, the highest order of the Christian ministry.

¹ Acts xiii. 22.

Thus we are permitted to contemplate our great exemplar in three several characters. First, as the Prophet and ministering servant of His Church exercising, after a divine and transcendent manner, those functions which, as we shall see presently, He was pleased to delegate to the apostles, when He called them to Himself, at the beginning of His earthly labours. Secondly, as our adorable High Priest, the source and actuating principle of that mysterious economy, which he committed to the eleven, after He had risen from the dead, and before He had ascended into heaven. Lastly, as our heavenly King, the fountain of *all* lawful power, and authority, but with an especial reference to the Church, the author and upholder of those ministerial gifts which He gave to men, when "He had ascended up on high, and had led captivity captive¹."

And of these characters, the latter, in each case, not merely retains, but matures and develops the former; so that the prophetic office is more fully asserted when united with the priesthood, than when exercised alone, while the kingship of the Redeemer confers fresh dignity on both. Thus, to recur to the foreshadowings of old time, David was a royal prophet; Melchizedek a royal priest; the latter, equally with the former, being a distinguished type of Christ: and thus under the Levitical dispensation, the sacerdotal office, more especially in the person of the high priest, "the ruler of the people²," involved the exercise of prophecy³.

Such was our heavenly pattern. But to pass to that ministerial economy which was ordained to bear his impress, (so I hope to prove,) and to reflect his offices, the functions of the deacon re-appear with fresh confirmation

¹ Eph. iv. 8.

² Act³ xxiii. 5.

³ Exod. vii. 1; John xi. 51.

and increased developement in the presbyter; and in like manner the priestly office, so far from being superseded, attains its highest consideration when united with episcopal rule. And this sufficiently explains why in the Scriptures, and earliest fathers, the titles of presbyter or deacon are sometimes associated with that of bishop in the same individual.

Finally, each of these degrees communicates to the other two its own characteristic colouring; so that, to a certain extent, what each is in particular, all are in general. The prophetic office fulfilled in the catechetical and pastoral instructions of the clergy, and associated, as in our Saviour's own person, so in that of His appointed ministers, with the low estate of a *servant*, though represented in the first instance by the peculiar functions of the deacon¹, re-appears, as before shown, in those of the presbyter and bishop; in such sort that the three orders form collectively a sacred *ministry*, taking this term in a strict and limited sense. But again, the same three orders have each of them a *sacerdotal* character, the two latter properly, as belonging to the mediatorial scheme in a later stage of developement; the diaconate as a first step anticipative, so to speak, of the higher degrees which are to follow. It is the province of a deacon, not merely to offer up prayers for the people², but under the authority of the diocesan, to baptize³, and assist at the Lord's table⁴:

¹ Οἱ διάκονοι καθαίρουσι διὰ κατηχήσεως καὶ διδασκαλίας — *Theoph.* in cap. xix. *Luc.* p. 489.

² Διάκονος τὰς ὑπὲρ τοῦ δήμου ἦν ἀναφέρων εὐχάς. — *Chrys. Hom.* xiv. in *Ep.* ad *Rom.*

³ Dandi baptismi jus habet summus sacerdos, qui est episcopus.

Dehinc presbyteri et diaconi, non tamen sine episcopi autoritate, propter ecclesiæ honorem: quo salvo salva pax est.

⁴ Οἱ καλούμενοι παρ' ἡμῖν Διάκονοι διδόασιν ἐκάστῳ τῶν παρόντων μεταλαβεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ εὐχαρισθητέντος ἄρτου, καὶ οἴνου καὶ ὕδατος, καὶ τοῖς οὐ

duties which cannot but be considered as appertaining to the priestly office. And such, indeed, appears to have been the judgment of the ancient Church¹.

Ecclesiastical government is committed, in the highest resort, to the episcopate, by whom however it is shared in certain proportions with the elders and inferior ministers, the former being united with the bishop in one of his most important functions, that of ordination, while both appear occasionally as his assessors in council. Hence it appears that the clergy possess *economic* powers as a body;

παροῦσιν ἀποφέρουσι.—These quotations, taken from *Suicer*, are sufficient to show the correspondence of practice, in these particulars, between the English and the primitive Church.

¹ See BINGHAM'S *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, book ii. chap. xix. sect. 15.—The distinction alluded to by Bingham, as taken by Alaspigny, and others of the Roman communion, between the prelatical and sacerdotal office in a bishop, is surely just in itself, however it may have been misapplied. It is not indeed true that "the bishop differs in nothing from the presbyter, as he is a priest." He differs in degree; and this is Bingham's own opinion, grounded upon the authority of Optatus. "Every order," such is his explanation, "has its share, though in different degrees, in the Christian priesthood." But besides this, the bishop, even in his catholic, or apostolical character, possesses peculiar powers, which cannot, in propriety of language, be entitled sacerdotal. To govern, to legislate, to oversee, in its widest sense,—these are functions

properly consorting with the priesthood, but not belonging to its essence. If the thing be objectionable, let us abandon the terms; but let us not retain the name of priesthood, while we palter with its meaning. My own views on the subject are given in the text.

Prelacy again is not a mere synonym of episcopacy, but a modification of it, resulting from the recognition of the Church as a national estate. We speak of a dignified, a learned, a judicious prelate; if he be rich and powerful, there is nothing in this incongruous with his character, or unsuitable to his station. We deprecate a needy and dependant prelacy. But we say an apostolical bishop; and when these epithets are interchanged, they may describe the man, but they cease to designate the office. If, however, the prelatical and episcopal functions be different, though properly exercised in the same individual, so also is the episcopal and sacerdotal office distinct, though the latter be necessarily conjoined with the former, in the same person.

and this, not merely with respect to their own flocks, but to the Church at large.

Thus in the Christian ministry, priesthood, pastorate, —the Church administrative and representative, three several ideas are realized. It is a dispensation, first of prophecy and divine instruction, secondly, of sacrifice and spiritual grace, lastly of rule and government, restricted indeed to the Church as a sacred polity, distinct from the State, but sharing in those expansive energies which characterize the kingdom of God, spreading as it spreads, the symbol and sanctifying principle of all lawful power and sovereignty. We see further that these ideas were successively developed in the Saviour's own person, and consequently in the history of the Church. That offices, corresponding to these dispensations, were formally deputed by our Lord himself to the apostles, with the intention that they should be continued in perpetual succession, till His coming again (which is the last of the three principles which I proposed to examine), must now be proved, as a question of fact, from sacred history, independently of ecclesiastical tradition. This will form the subject of my next sermon, the last on this important branch of my general inquiry—the *scriptural character*, namely, of the three ministerial orders as they appear in the English Church.

I conclude with a caution, suggested by the aspect of the present time, in particular by the ominous tendency to popish doctrines lately manifested, and the actual spread of papal power in this Protestant land, the demesne of a happily reformed, and truly catholic Church.

Things most precious in their use, in their abuse become most mischievous. This general maxim applies with peculiar force to religious teaching. Here especially

there are no falsehoods so dangerous as perverted truths. In the Douay Catechism¹, we read as follows:

Q. “Is any great honour due to priests and ghostly fathers?”

A. “Yes; for they are God’s anointed, *represent the person of Christ*, and are the fathers and feeders of our souls.”

The pernicious tendency of the doctrine, here delivered, lies not more in the turn of the phrase, (though “to represent the *person* of Christ” is at best an ambiguous and inconvenient expression,) than in the interpretation to which it is liable, and which we know that it is intended to receive. It is the *practical* corruptions of the Romish system, which supply the venom of Romanist theology. If while the representative nature of the Christian priesthood be recognized in terms, an independent self-centred power be in fact attributed to the priest; if instead of symbolizing that immanence of the incarnate Word, the Light of the world, and the Life of men, which is the blessed portion of the Church at large, he is practically regarded as His vicar and substitute; then, instead of the one Christ, variously communicating himself through the Spirit, to every member of his mystical body, we have indeed, “Lords many, and Mediators many”—a blind idolatry, and an impious priestcraft. The quality of the doctrine is, as it were, reversed, and instead of reconciling the powers and functions of a ministering priesthood, with the exclusive attributes of the Saviour on the one hand, and the diffusive privileges of the faithful on the other, it places them in obvious contrast with both: instead of annihilating all personal pretensions on the part of the clergy, and subduing those of an official nature

¹ Pp. 70 and 41—Keating and Brown, 1824.

to a just harmony with the general scheme, it enforces the first and unduly exalts the other.

Let it not then be objected to the doctrine of this sermon, that *something like it* is taught by the Roman church in subserviency to a belief and practice which no awakened mind can contemplate without horror. It has so fared with many vital truths. Long divided from the source of life, they have been preserved in the Romish creed as in a reliquary, not merely deprived of virtue, but with the accession of a pernicious quality, as the droppings of the yew-tree are said to become poisonous, not on their native branch, but after they have left it:—dry fragments, torn from the tree of life, and exhibiting in their unaltered sameness, not the identity of a living form, but the rigidity of a dead image. Still their existence in the formularies of that ancient Church, though the occasion of idolatrous error, and the specious pretext of many corruptions, testifies to the reality of certain corresponding truths, with which they have been formerly identical; truths which they have ceased to be, but which they still resemble. Thus, to employ an illustration still more in point, a so-called petrification, although in substance wholly foreign to that which it appears, and which it does but mimic, though in itself a feculent subsidence, that has gradually eaten out and displaced the original matter, still records the existence, and partly discloses the structure of that living thing, of which it has usurped the name, and assumed the semblance.

If then we are assailed by lying vanities in the disguise of vital truths, let us not hope to repel the former, by attempting to discountenance the latter. Rather by giving these an increased prominence, and subjecting them to a closer study, let us learn to recognize their distinctive

features, and to confess their peculiar power. So shall we pre-occupy the ground which in no other way can permanently be defended.

Alas! it is a childish prudence to reject the reality, because we have been mocked with a counterfeit.

SERMON XII.

THE SAINTS, OR THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, AS DELINEATED IN THE APOSTOLIC SCRIPTURES.

PART IV.—THE COMMISSION OF THE APOSTLES ASCERTAINED FROM SCRIPTURE.

JOHN xx. 21.

As my Father hath sent me, so send I you.

HITHERTO I have been engaged in the examination of scripture principles, as exemplified in the economy of the existing Church, thus seeking to confirm the presumption created in favour of the latter, by its actual position, and traditional character. The results to which I have arrived have already been subjected to the ordeal of scripture incidentally, in a variety of ways: and it only remains, in conclusion, to apply this searching test to one particular branch of the enquiry. Did the apostles receive a formal commission from their divine Master? If so, what was its nature? Had it, as from various considerations we have been led to conclude, a three-fold character, formally impressed upon it by the great Head of the Church? A very brief collation of the several scriptures bearing upon this point, will, I trust, suffice to answer these questions in the affirmative.

If, indeed, the view which I have taken of the three sacred orders, as they appear in the historical Church, be correct, if ideally considered, they are found to set forth, in their very nature and constitution, the several offices

of that incarnate Word, from whom they emanate, and in whom alone they have their being, a correspondence thus included in their definition, and interwoven, as clearly appears, with their original texture, born with them at their birth, (to adopt a more expressive metaphor,) and revealing itself more and more with their healthy growth,—cannot be accidental, cannot be other than divine. Fore-shadowed by appointments, which bore, as we know, the seal of God himself, and actually appearing in the Church, ere the sound of apostolic admonition had ceased to vibrate in the earliest assemblies of the Saints, what other supposition carries with it even a shew of probability?

And, indeed, if the text of scripture did not supply minuter evidence, it might suffice at this point of the argument, to allege the solemn words of my text, “As my Father hath sent me, so send I you.” For thus spake the Saviour Himself to the apostles, making His own mission, in some sort, the standard of theirs: a standard, not of honour and dignity, as if His own adorable worthiness admitted of measure or comparison, but of kind and description, even as the functions of a monarch may be represented by his ambassadors, without the smallest derogation from his own supremacy. “*As my Father hath sent me,*” (not *in as much as*, but *in the same manner as*,) “so send I you,” my apostles and delegates. I say, that this scripture alone, in its most general acceptation, might lead us to expect a certain correspondence between the several characters assumed by the Head of the Church, and those deputed to His accredited ministers:—not as if there should be any thing of themselves, but as if Christ would carry on His gracious offices through their instrumentality; not as if He should not dwell with power in *every*

believer, but as if this divine energy should be specially set forth in *some*, for the benefit and assurance of *all*.

Accordingly, it stands on record, not only that the apostles were invested in the first instance with certain determinate functions, but that as the characters sustained by our blessed Lord were successively developed in His own person, so the delegated powers of His ministers were renewed with a corresponding enlargement. A comparison of the actual structure of the Church, in its earliest state, with all that we know independently of the ever-expanding scheme of human redemption, points, indeed, demonstratively to *some* such origination, as the only way of accounting for the facts at all, much more for that wonderful harmony with the divine purpose, as revealed in Christ himself, which they are seen to exhibit. If, however, we can refer to positive documents, if we can produce the original commission of the apostles, with its subsequent modifications and extensions, the circle of evidence will be complete, and the argument fully wound up.

How the Saviour was Himself sent by the Father on His labour of love, by what steps He was made Head of all things to the Church, Prophet, Priest, and King, the infinite and eternal source of light, and life, and power, to all that believe in His name, has been already pointed out. Let me now add, that though the Spirit was not given to Him "by measure",¹ no, not to "the *man* Christ Jesus",² yet He was pleased to receive it as a special gift from heaven, communicated in a given way, for given purposes. He is emphatically Messiah, the Anointed. His unction, though eminently spiritual, (that is, not as theretofore a typical shadow, but a substantive reality,) being determined to particular times and occasions, either by visible

¹ John iii. 34.

² 1 Tim. ii. 5.

signs, or by declarative words, or by a particular revelation, amounting in each case to a virtual institution and investiture. It will not be doubted that this was done for our sakes, as part of that exemplary scheme which He condescended to act through, in his own person, for the direction of those that should come after. For so it is throughout. The tribute which we pay to our heavenly Sovereign is stamped with His own image and superscription. If the Saviour was pleased to pass through degrees of office, and to acknowledge a *special* endowment, fitting Him for the discharge of each, such must thenceforth be the rule of His Church.

But, to proceed to particulars. Passing over the annunciation of the angel to the holy Mary, as prophetic, rather than inaugural, we read that at His baptism "the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: And lo! a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased¹." Thus was the blessed Jesus first declared the Son of God; not as at His resurrection from the dead, "with power²," but in the body of His earthly humiliation. "The heir, though lord of all, differed as yet in nothing from a servant³," and in this lowly guise was He shown unto Israel, as that prophet whom the Lord their God would raise up unto them, of their brethren, to whom they were to hearken⁴.

It was not His gracious will to exercise this office alone. Almost His first act, after His entrance upon His public ministry, was to separate to Himself certain of His disciples, in a peculiar character, for the furtherance of His great design, to whom "He gave power and authority

¹ Matt. iii. 16, 17; compare xvii. 5.

² Rom. i. 4.

³ Gal. iv. 1.

⁴ Acts vii. 37.

over all devils, and to cure diseases¹,” “sending them forth to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick².”

Here, then, we observe a distinct appointment or commission, by which a select number of our Lord’s disciples are called out from the remainder, to share with their lowly Master, in His painful and affectionate services; to warn, to instruct, to comfort; to combat with the powers of darkness, and to proclaim the kingdom of God.

In the functions thus deputed by our Lord to the apostles, in the time when he himself was “among them as one that served³,” can we fail to recognise the original and pattern of a corresponding office subsequently constituted in the Church,—the deaconate, or Christian ministry, in its first, and humblest form?

But the Saviour’s earthly, mortal, life was but the opening of His great career. Having died for our sins, He must rise again for our justification. He is now “our merciful High Priest in things pertaining to God⁴,” and pursuing the method which He had adopted in the former

¹ Luke ix. 1.

² Matt. x. 1. It is to be remarked, that neither the duties here specified, nor the powers with which they were accompanied, accrued to the apostles at once as the simple consequence of their Christian profession. They were first called;—*follow me*, is the Saviour’s first invitation: then chosen, from a considerably larger number of disciples, “that they might be with him always,”—and then, after a while, formally ordained, in the manner recited in the text. Again, it was not *as* apostles, not as the twelve select companions and witnesses of

our Saviour’s ministry, that they discharged this service. Other seventy were similarly commissioned and empowered. But our attention may properly be restricted to the former, because they were chosen by the Saviour, as above stated, to be with him *always*; and this, in a peculiar sense, that they might minister to him successively in every capacity, and so become a model to that Church, which was to be built upon them, as a foundation.

³ Luke xxii. 27.

⁴ Heb. ii. 17.

instance, He invests His delegates with new functions, still mysteriously connected with His own. It is on this occasion that the solemn words which stand at the head of this discourse, were actually addressed by our Lord to the apostles; "As the Father hath sent me, so send I you." Of the general principle implied in this pregnant declaration, I have already spoken: the particular application, as determined by the connexion, remains to be considered. It is Jesus risen from the grave, the Priest within the veil, the mediating God man, who speaks. Sent by the Father to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and justify an elect people, through faith, by the implantation of a righteousness, not their own, but His, He now sends the apostles, making their mission expressly dependent on His own. He sends them in His own name, instruments in His own hands, duly ordained and aptly qualified to carry into effect this gracious scheme, among His human brethren; to be "able ministers of the New Testament¹," sealed by His blood, and "stewards" of its divine "mysteries²;" to show His death, and betoken, in a way by Himself appointed, the communion of His body:—to make known the riches of His grace, His mercy, and severity, and declare with full authority, the remission and retention of sins. But what are His very words? "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained³."

Thus commissioned, the apostles are set forth as the type and original of a Christian priesthood, or exhibition

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 6.

² 1 Cor. iv. 1.

³ John xx. 21, 22, 23.

of Christ in his mediatorial character, being, in respect of its power, no other than Christ himself,—the life and sustentation of the universal Church,—Christ who is pleased to *represent* in *some* that which He is in *all*, *He* is in us, and *we* in Him. Of this vital communion, in which the Church subsisting in Christ, “moves, lives, and has its being,” the Lord’s Supper is an eminent symbol, and through faith, an effectual means. It was, therefore, impossible to delineate the uses of the priestly office, as the appointed organ of the one, without a pointed allusion to the other. Yet this holy rite was instituted before our Saviour’s death; before the paschal sacrifice, which it was intended to commemorate and represent, had actually taken place; consequently, before the conditions on which its efficacy was to depend, or rather in which its very meaning consisted, were fulfilled. It was, therefore, appointed *with a reference to the future*; and such is the tenor of the original record, “Do this in remembrance of me¹,” “This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it *new* with you in my Father’s kingdom².” The ministerial appointments of our Saviour are to be regarded in the same light. They anticipate a forthcoming economy, and must be taken as an outline, or plan of a structure, the first stones of which were not set till a subsequent period. As wise master-builders, the apostles laid the foundation: others built thereon³: but the “pattern” was “shown” by Christ himself.

It is thus that we are to judge of the last and most important of those divine commissions, of which I have to

¹ Luke xxii. 19.

² Matt. xxvi. 28, 29.

³ 1 Cor. iii. 10.

speaking, and which, as in the two former cases, is expressly connected with a corresponding change in the functions and dignity of our Lord himself. "All power," He declares, "is given unto me in heaven, and in earth,"—thus announcing Himself as our heavenly King; and immediately proceeding to appoint His ambassadors,—“Go ye therefore,” thus he charges His apostles; “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world, Amen¹.” Here, then, we see the ministerial scheme of the Church, as it emanated from its divine Author, fully developed. Missionary, catholic, constitutive, pastoral; the duties it imposed were, to go—to all nations—to baptize—to teach. An embassy from heaven to earth, sent forth with authority to establish the kingdom of Christ from one end of the world to the other, it was to remain in force till the king himself should appear in person. Meanwhile He would be with them alway, present by his power, though unseen.

Such is the original to which the Church refers the all-important functions of the episcopate, or apostolic office, in which the whole of its administrative system may be regarded as involved; if, indeed, it was by the apostles, that the Church itself was to be formed, organized, and regulated. For with the apostles, in this their official character, the Lord will be present “till the end of the world.”

The long precluding strain,—the first note of which

¹ Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

had been struck in Paradise, to save the sin-doomed Adam from despair,—now drew to its close. Its last echo was awakened in Mount Olivet, and the voice of angels mingled in its dying fall. The Word made flesh, had suffered and overcome death: one condition remained to be fulfilled; He must re-ascend into His native heaven before the “ministry of reconciliation,” thus solemnly announced, thus clearly delineated, thus divinely ratified, could actually go forth into the world. Then it was, when His heavenly Father “had set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come¹,” that the Son of God and man, was “given to be Head over all things to his Church,” and thus put in actual possession of that kingly power with which He had declared Himself invested².

Accordingly, though the apostles had been commanded “to go and teach all nations,” yet were they to wait at Jerusalem “till they should be endued with power from on high³.” True, in a certain sense, they had already received the Holy Ghost. The deed of gift was truly conveyed, but with a reference, always implied, and repeatedly expressed, by its divine Author, to that general outpouring of the Spirit—the first fruits of our Lord’s ascension—which was to give effect to the whole economy of grace. “In those days,” said Jehovah by his prophet, “I will pour out of my Spirit upon *all* flesh⁴.” This is the breath of life by which the mystical body of Christ, at the very moment of its birth, was made “a living soul.”

¹ Ephes. i. 20, 21. ² See Potter’s Church Government, chap. ii. s. 3.

³ Luke xxiv. 49.

⁴ Joel ii. 28; Acts ii. 17.

In the Church catholic thus embodied and informed, the apostles took up their high office; specially commissioned and empowered, yet strictly dependent upon that *universal unction*, which was the precious distinction of every child of God¹, in such sort that the eminent endowments which they had formerly received, and which they were now to exercise, while they set forth the heavenly functions of that Christ Who, dwelling in every portion of His body entire, and perfect, is pleased to manifest His divine operations specially in those members which He has fitted to this end, served at the same time as a pledge and assurance to every other believer of the possession of the same high privileges, to his own everlasting benefit. Thus, in the Church of Christ, if there be rule and sovereign liberty, if there be sacrifice and mediation, if there be light and heavenly wisdom; if Christ be all these, not only *for* His people, but *in* them, He in them, and they in Him; if the bondage, the curse, the darkness of sin, be thus exchanged for freedom, blessing, and illumination; if Christ, to accomplish these gracious ends, has been pleased to assume corresponding offices; if He be our King, our Priest, our Prophet, is it matter of cavil, and not rather of adoration and admiring praise, that we are taught to see these eternal verities, visibly imaged in a sacred polity, in which we are ourselves enrolled, and of which every man in his own person may realize the intent and meaning? A polity not contrived to elevate the few at the expense of the many, but by the "office and ministry" of some, to exalt and dignify all.

And what if we have "this treasure in earthen vessels?" What if the divine institutions of which we

¹ 1 John ii. 20.

have been treating, as they are actually exhibited in our land, be associated with much imperfection? What, if the effectual working of the system be much impeded, not merely by the infirmity and short-coming of the human agents employed, but by causes foreign to itself, arising out of our political condition, past and present? Deeply as this is to be deplored on general grounds, our position, *as individuals*, remains the same. Let us not be withheld by faithless fear, still less by infidel contempt, engendered by the show of worldly wisdom, from asserting it on our own behalf, and striving to make it good. The kingdom of God is among us; the holy, the catholic, the apostolic Church of Christ, as eternally mirrored in His own gracious and glorious person, as authoritatively represented by the apostles, their associates, and successors, as effectually identified with the whole body of believers,—co-equal in Christ, and members one of another,—has come down to us in spirit and in power. Neglected, counteracted, overborne, it has still both a spiritual and bodily presence to be felt and seen, both in high and low places. Though out of sight and forgotten, it is the ground of all our most cherished institutions. It has left its form and pressure on all that we are, and on everything that we do, though we cast aside the seal. It is wrought up with our national existence, and cannot be disengaged from it without destroying the entire fabric, whether the web be rent with sudden violence, or silently unravelled thread by thread.

Of this catholic Church, bishops, priests, and deacons, are constituent elements. Whatever else they may be, they have a catholic character, in which the very existence of the Church as an outward dispensation depends. Can the office exist without a functionary to discharge it?

But if this office, in its three-fold definition, be as I have attempted to explain, a representation of heavenly things, (not a mere emblem devised by man, but a true symbol appointed by Christ Himself,) then it is an integral part of that which it wholly shows, participating in the power, and conveying the blessings of that system, which it thus authoritatively exhibits. And in exact proportion as pastoral rule is declined, as priestly ministrations are rejected, as the stated services and authorized teaching of the Church are slighted, will the unity of the Christian body be distracted, the power of religious exercises enfeebled, and the integrity of revealed truth impaired. With what result? To what can we look as the ultimate product of such tendencies, but a godless state, an impotent nation, and a miserable people!

SERMON XIII.

THE SACRAMENTS.

PART I.—ON THE NATURE OF A SACRAMENT.

1 CORINTHIANS ii. 6, 7.

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory.

HAVING endeavoured in my three last discourses to bring together such notions of the Christian church, as appear to be suggested by its ministerial economy, (notions, which may perhaps serve in some measure to explain and account for those sacred appointments, the existence and validity of which are matters of historical fact, and scriptural testimony,) it will be necessary, as well in prosecution of my general design, as in further illustration of the opinions which I have already hazarded, to extend the inquiry to another class of ordinances, emanating, equally with the former, from Christ Himself, and involved, no less essentially, in the constitution of His mystical body. It will readily be understood that I speak of the sacraments, mysteries, and authentic symbols of our most holy faith: and more particularly of the two great sacraments, baptism and the eucharist, to which, in accordance with their high and distinctive character, both as exclusively Christian, and as “generally necessary to salvation¹,” the term

¹ *Church Catechism.*

is commonly restricted by Protestant divines'. It will be my business to show that these "heavenly mysteries" are not merely signs, but instruments of grace,—outward tokens by which certain fundamental ideas, involved in the essence of Christianity, are set forth and represented, not arbitrarily nor vainly, but by divine appointment and with answering power. Thus a close analogy is observable between the sacraments and the ministerial offices, the representative *things* and the representative *persons*, which our Lord has "set in the Church." Pursuing, therefore, the same method which I have adopted in investigating the nature and authority of the latter, I shall examine first, the relation apparently subsisting between the indwelling life of the Church and its sacramental forms, as they have come down to us in our own communion; and from the correspondency observable between the vital function and the outward organ, I shall hope to evince,

' "In a general acceptation," says the author of the *Homily on Common Prayer and the Sacraments*, "the name of a sacrament may be attributed to anything whereby a holy thing is signified." Wherever, then, a divine mystery is couched under a fixed outward exponent, the latter may not improperly be entitled *sacramental*, though, from motives of convenience, we refuse it the name of a *sacrament*. "In the writings of the ancient fathers," to borrow the language of Hooker, "all articles which are peculiar to the Christian faith, or duties of religion containing that which sense or natural reason cannot of itself discern, are called *sacraments*."—*Eccles. Pol.* v. 1, 2. In strictness of speech these are *mysteries*, *μυστήρια*,

the revealed secrets of the Divine mind, incomprehensible by any finite intelligence, but recognized in appropriate symbols or representative signs, *σύμβολα*. It is the union or co-inherence of the two which properly constitutes a sacrament *sacramentum*; so called, perhaps, from its religious use, as a federal *oath*, by which we enter into covenant and union with the Head of the Church, and through Him, with the members at large; or renew and confirm our previous engagements; but it is often taken for the thing signified, and conversely. In this general sense the term is not restrained to any particular rite or ceremony.—*Vide* HOFFMAN.—*Lexicon Universale*, in *voc. Sacramentum*.

² HOOKER.

not merely the entire conformity of these institutions, as understood and practised by the Church of England, to the mind and words of Christ, but their inherent fitness to effect the divine ends proposed:—if so we may be permitted to catch a glimpse of His all-gracious purposes, and thus be made to feel how beyond thought we are indebted no less to His wisdom, than to His love!

That the solemn observances to which I allude, are in themselves a *memorial* of the divine intention with which they were instituted, and serve as a perpetual tradition of heavenly truth; that they are symbols and means of Christian communion, in its widest sense, reconciling permanence with succession, catholic extension with unity, and this both in regard to time and place; finally, that they present a lively and affecting picture of our spiritual life, from the death of the old man, to the consummation of the new; these all-important uses may in passing be referred to, in confirmation of the principle with which we set out. They prove that the sacraments are in effect, that which they are defined to be, *exponents* in a high and peculiar sense, of the Christian scheme at large.

And if in any part of this discussion, a tone be assumed, approaching to that of *philosophic* inquiry, let it not be deemed incongruous with the subject, or incompatible with devotional feeling. In the *love* of the truth, would we seek “the truth,” which we are told, “will make us free¹.” This is philosophy, this alone; and whenever it is genuine, it “cometh from above²,” a gift of that Holy Spirit which “searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God³.” Would we then be wise above what is written? God forbid! We would ascertain what is

¹ John viii. 32.

² James iii. 17.

³ 1 Cor. ii. 10.

written, "that we may know the things which are freely given to us of God'." It is with this intent that we "compare spiritual things with spiritual."

The declaration of the apostle contained in the text may be taken as a ministerial precept, of general application indeed, but bearing peculiarly on the present subject¹. We speak wisdom among the "perfect²."—We address our ministry to Christian believers; men, accessible to the motives, and guided by the light, of a spiritual revelation; and what is our teaching? Not the suggestions of a delusive expediency, not the maxims of an infidel state policy, "the wisdom of this world, and of the princes of this world, that shall come to nought; but the

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 12.

² The cautious restrictions observed by the primitive Church, not only in the celebration of the Communion Service, but in the exhibition of sacramental doctrines, may be referred to, as illustrating the meaning of the apostle; at least in one point of view. To quote the high authority of Mr. Palmer, "it was chiefly, if not only, in the mystical liturgy of the eucharist, that the primitive Church spoke without reserve of all the sublimities of Christian faith. When the catechumens and infidels, who were permitted to hear the lessons and sermon, had been dismissed, there was no longer anything to impede the disclosure of those profound truths, which the faith of the ignorant and undisciplined could not yet receive." This also appears from the use made of the terms, τέλειοι and τέλειον³. "Believers were

otherwise called τέλειοι and τελειούμενοι, The Perfect, because they were consummate Christians, who had a right to participate of the holy eucharist; the τὸ τέλειον, as it is frequently called in the canons of the ancient councils, where ἐπὶ τέλειον ἐλθεῖν and τοῦ τελείου μετέχειν always signify participation of the holy eucharist, that sacred mystery that unites us to Christ, and gives us the most consummate perfection that we are capable of in this world^b." Hence, too, the distinction between "missa catechumenorum" and "missa fidelium^c."

³ Τελείους λέγει τοὺς πεπιστευκότας· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοί τε λείοι, οἱ τὰ ἀνθρώπινα εἶδοτες ὅτι σφόδρα ἀσθενῇ, καὶ ὑπεριδόντες αὐτῶν, ὅτι μηδὲν αὐτοῖς συμβάλλεται πεπεισμένοι, οἱ γέγονασιν οἱ πιστοί.—*Chrys. Hom. vii. in hanc epist.* (2 Cor. ii.)

PALMER, *Orig. Lit. Introd.* vol. i. p. 13.

^b BINGHAM, book i. chap. iv. sect. 3.

^c *Ib.* xiii. iv. 3.

wisdom of God in a mystery," the divine secret, essentially mysterious, "the hidden wisdom," to be known only as it is revealed, "which God ordained before the world unto our glory." This it is that we mean when we determine with the same apostle "not to know anything" in our preaching, but "Jesus Christ and Him crucified¹;" an excellency of knowledge only to be attained through humiliation and self-denial of heart and mind. Not as if we really sank to that which we must for ever soar to reach, or were denied the exercise of any faculty, of mind, or spirit; all, all required and graciously accepted as our *reasonable* service². Not as if the masteries of a sanctified intellect were not proper to be offered in sacrifice at the Saviour's altar. All real knowledge culminates in "the wisdom of God;" and we know nothing else, because in this is combined all that the Father of lights enables us to learn. Let us covet nothing more, and be content with nothing less.

We have now "to follow the Lamb" from the waters of Jordan to the paschal altar. This will lead us into the very sanctuary of the temple, there to examine and take account of its holy things, with no vain nor irreverent curiosity, but to observe their real nature and surpassing excellence,—hoping to guard them from profanation on the one hand, and from idolatry on the other. May the survey be prosecuted with sober caution, and in the attitude of prayer!

It will not be denied, that the salvation of the human race, sinful and helpless as it is by nature, is eternally contemplated in the counsels of Jehovah, nor that the

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 2.

² λογικὴ λατρεία, service of reason, or according to the Word, | as opposed to blind and formal devotion.

remedy proposed is *in some sense* co-extensive with the disease; the one universal, the other all-embracing and unlimited. "The free gift," says the apostle, "came upon all men unto righteousness¹." It is equally undeniable that the method employed to carry this gracious design into effect, has ever been the separation of a portion of mankind from the remainder, with which God is pleased to connect himself in a peculiar manner; to incorporate himself, if the expression be allowable, so as to render them *as a body* the instrument of his mysterious operations, and a visible pledge of his mercy. This is the Israel of God; His people and household, His temple and priesthood, the guardian of His oracles, and the organ of His revealed will. Again, when "the shadow of good things to come" was changed into "the express image," this is the Church; the witness and pattern of divine truth; the light and salt of the world; a little leaven, that is to leaven the whole mass. In either case it is distinguished as the dwelling-place of Immanuel, that divine presence, which was veiled in the type, being revealed in the fulfilment. Eventually it is made known to us as the living body of Christ, the manifestation of His Spirit, and outward token of His favour. Thus in the Church itself, *universally considered*, we detect a *sacramental* character. It is a visible exhibition of an invisible power; an embodied mystery, communicating sacramentally the inward grace which it sets forth.

For "as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive²." As the first Adam is a type of the old man, the head and representative of the whole race, fallen and condemned in him, so that what is true of that "one man" in particular, by whom sin entered the world,

¹ See Romans v. throughout.

² 1 Cor. xv. 22.

and “death by sin¹,” must be true of the natural man in general, so is the second Adam a specimen of the new man,—the head and representative of the whole Church,—so that what is true of Christ in particular, must *in Him* be true of the spiritual man in general². “For it pleased the Father, that in Him should all fulness dwell³,” “and of His fulness have all we received⁴,” so that the Church, in a passive sense, is called “the fulness of Him that filleth all in all⁵.” Thus, while we see in Christ Jesus “the fulness of the Godhead bodily⁶,” we become “partakers of the divine nature⁷,” “Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith⁸.” We look to Christ, and behold in Him, as in a mirror, not that which we are, but that which we then become; ourselves, yet not ourselves; not us, but “Christ that liveth in us⁹ :” ourselves, no longer naked and ashamed, but wrapped in the robe of his essential righteousness,—changed and glorified,—“a new creature¹⁰.” The state thus attained is described by the apostle as “the perfect man, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ¹¹ ;” and the time when it shall be fully realized, is spoken of as the “perfect day,” when the Lord shall appear, when “we shall see Him as He is,” and “be made like unto Him,” “according to the” mighty “working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself¹².” Meanwhile the change is going on. Let us attend to the process, its circumstances, and results.

There is first a beginning of change, when old things pass away, and all things become new. From this we

¹ Rom. v. 12.

² I speak, of course, of the essence, or nature, the τὸ κοινὸν of regenerate man.

³ Col. i. 19.

⁴ John i. 16.

⁵ Eph. i. 23.

⁶ Col. ii. 9.

⁷ 2 Pet. i. 4.

⁸ Eph. iii. 17.

⁹ Gal. ii. 19.

¹⁰ Gal. vi. 15.

¹¹ Eph. iv. 13.

¹² Phil. iii. 21.

date the possibility of every future attainment, and the total effect is frequently spoken of as involved in the cause. Secondly, there is a continuance of this change, a growing transformation, a perpetual renewal. The original change, or passing out of the old man into the new, must be carried on and sustained. Both of these operations are absolutely divine, being wrought in us of pure grace, by superior power, and in a manner necessarily transcending human conception. Our natural and spiritual birth are in this respect perfect counterparts, and the same is true of the "food convenient" to our natural body, as compared with the "heavenly manna" necessary for our spiritual support.

Of these gracious dealings, the first is properly described in the term regeneration. The other has no single name. It is the life of God in the soul of man,—a new life, consequent upon a new birth,—and implies all the aids of the Holy Spirit, with every other condition of a sanctified state. Both are necessarily invisible and supernatural; that is to say, they are not cognizable by the senses, nor the subject of conscious experience. They lie in the sphere of conscience, and are apprehended by faith; conscience being the organ, and faith the act, through which they become known to us. In the language of Scripture, they are "spiritually discerned." Now religion considered as a personal attribute, is neither moral sentiment, nor pious emotion; neither acquired knowledge, nor insight, nor belief, though it includes and presupposes all these. It is essentially practical,—an act, or energy, and not a mere state or feeling,—and consequently requires (as distinguished from each of the above) the union of an inward and spiritual reality with an outward and positive action. To attribute any power to the latter, indepen-

dently of the former, is superstition¹; to rest upon the former, independently of the latter, is mere quietism, or sacred contemplation; to take the feelings as the true exponents of spiritual realities is fanaticism. The first of these is the lifeless form of religion; the second its wandering and impalpable shade; the last is its evil spirit. Each of these, when substituted for religion, is idolatry; the first of the senses, the second of the intellect, the last (partaking of both the former) of the inward senses, or sensations. Religion, on the other hand, while it implies the existence of a hidden power, demands the use of visible tokens, symbols, means. It deals with prayers, sacrifices, services, sacraments. This is the general proposition. But in the Christian religion, "the great mystery of godliness" is *revealed*. "God was manifest in the flesh²." "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared him³." "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory⁴."

The religion of Christ, therefore, is the effectual, permanent, universal exhibition of Himself. He is preached, set forth, shown; by words, by persons, by things. *Thus* are we made partakers of His nature. We die, we live with Him. He is the first-born of many brethren; no secret company, but "a spectacle to men and angels⁵." If then we die from the world of sin, and "are born again by the Word of God⁶," unto "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness⁷;" and if in this new and spiritual state, our souls are fed with celestial

¹ Virium et proprietatum, quæ non nisi de substantibus predicari possunt, formis superstantibus attributio, est superstitio.—COLERIDGE'S *Aids to Reflection*, p. 182. Note.

² 1 Tim. iii. 16.

³ John i. 18.

⁴ John i. 14.

⁵ 1 Cor. iv. 9.

⁶ 1 Pet. i. 23.

⁷ 2 Pet. iii. 13.

manna, by which they are “strengthened and refreshed,” and without which there is no life in them, is it not reasonable to suppose that some visible token has been afforded, making known those high mysteries to ourselves and others? Might we not have anticipated that the inward energy would, by express enactment, be so connected with some outward sign, as to make the latter (the requisite spiritual conditions being present) a fixed medium of communication between the seen and the unseen? If so, we are prepared to admit, with no estrangement of feeling, the existence and necessity of SACRAMENTS in the strict ecclesiastical sense, as “outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof¹.”

Not that we may presume to tie down the secret operations of the Almighty to circumstances of time or place. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth².” All that can be pretended is, that these operations are made known to us practically by certain authentic symbols, the legitimate use of which is essential to religion; symbols, I repeat, instinct through faith with the power which they represent, and constituting in a large sense the only possible *révélation* of spiritual truth. Seen in this light, religion or revealed knowledge, implying in its definition both faith and practice, is necessarily sacramental. It is the declaration of the Infinite, mysteriously united with the finite: the *Word* made flesh: the Light, that lighteth *every man*, coming to His own, that He might be received: the only-begotten of the Father dwelling amongst us, that we

¹ Church Catechism.

² John iii. 8.

might *behold* His glory: the Life of the world embodied, that it might be touched and handled, recognized, fed upon, and made our own. And what is this but to say, in conformity with St. Paul, “that Christ filleth all in all,”—the Church, with all it involves, its living members and vital acts being, as we are repeatedly assured, his fulness, or visible recipient, his actualizing symbol, and sacramental body?

If then we observe in the visible Church a system of outward ordinances, not arbitrarily contrived to answer certain proposed ends, but generated, as it were, by a corresponding system of inward and spiritual truths, which they serve in various ways to reveal and recommend; to reveal as the subjects, not of barren speculation, but of practical duties, of faith, and hope, and love; to recommend,—“not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and power¹,”—mysteries, or sacraments in the general sense, as they were severally called by the Greek and Latin portions of early Christendom: we see in this but the actual working of a great principle, the foundation not only of the present, but of every other inquiry into Christian truth. The Church itself is such a mystery, such a sacrament: and that which it is universally, cannot but pervade its constituent parts.. This, as I understand it, (if my weak words have not failed to convey my meaning,) is the all-important fact which the beloved apostle specially undertook to record, the fundamental doctrine which the great preacher of the Gentiles was specially commissioned to teach, even the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church² outwardly signified. And though at an earlier period of the Chris-

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 4.

² Marriage Service.

tian morn, blindness happened to the Israel of faith, in part¹, blindness of heart, issuing in dimness and distortion of mental vision, that spread and darkened more and more, as the day advanced, till it threatened (but for the promise of Christ to His Church that it should never fail) to put out the light of the body, utterly and for ever, this Scripture remained so deeply and intelligibly engraven in the outward forms of worship and communion, that it never wholly passed from the minds of men; one here, and another there, appearing in perpetual succession, to read the writing, and make known the interpretation², till the torch of Scripture was again lifted up, and they who ran could read it. Then if we are asked, who was among the first to proclaim clearly and emphatically this vital truth,—to preach “Christ and him crucified³” in the living members and constituted forms of “His mystical body,”—we may point to Luther, the mighty leader of the Reformation, the Samson of a subjugated Church, by whose burning zeal and giant strength the yoke of her oppression was to be broken, and the house of Dagon brought low. Or if we seek confirmation from the great teachers of our own land, or within the bosom of our own Church, let us read and study again and again the Communion Service in the English Prayer Book, and particularly the two exhortations and the prayers in the post-communion⁴; lest we think that these views have any necessary connection with the errors or the corruption of papal Rome.

And although these forms cannot but have originated when the truths, to which they correspond, were first revealed; nay, though in many cases they are to be traced

¹ Rom. xi. 25.

² Daniel v. 16.

³ 1 Cor. ii. 2.

⁴ See *Literary Remains of S. T. COLERIDGE*. Vol. iii. p. 8.

back to a former dispensation,—having been already delineated in the types by which the inward grace was foreshadowed,—so that the prophetic figure having, at the time appointed, disclosed its hidden meaning, still retains it as a commemorative sign ; yet there is nothing inconsistent in the supposition, that they may have assumed their permanent features and full developement more or less gradually. We may expect to identify the firm outlines and distinct colouring, exhibited by the visible ordinances of the Church, fully settled and matured, with the fainter indications of an earlier period. This will but prove that the inward verity and the outward exponent have a natural, or, to speak more truly, a divine connection. And if, in addition to the essential form, time and circumstance have given in each case something adventitious, something of dress and ornament, not to be confounded with the form itself, there is nothing in these outward “lendings” as such, to occasion reasonable offence. They may be fit, though not indispensable ; entitled to respect, though not strictly sacred ; by no means to be lightly changed, nor yet to be looked upon as wholly immutable.

Thus have I endeavoured to account, in a general way, for the mysterious character which ancient piety attributed *in terms* to the traditional rites and ceremonies of the Church, and which modern piety, however it may have been taught to word its expressions, still feels and enjoys. But the train of reasoning in which we are engaged leads to a particular result of far higher importance. If the Church be itself, as I have shown, the mystical body of Christ, having an outward representation in the world, and if into this body, every individual member must first be incorporated, by a supernatural change, and then keep

up and feed its new life by supernatural sustenance; then there are two special sacraments, two mysterious truths, with their corresponding symbols, not merely pre-eminent in degree, but peculiar to this extent in kind, that the spiritual operations to which they refer are of strict necessity, not only to the Church at large, but to every individual member. The scriptural proofs of this position demand a separate and attentive consideration; but in delivering a doctrine expressly revealed by our Saviour, it is right and fitting to state it at once in his own divine words. "Ye must be born again¹." "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you²." These are the two essential mysteries of the gospel, (for the "great mystery of godliness³" involves them both.) Well, then, may the Church declare, of the two authentic tokens affixed to these by Christ himself, that these, and these alone, "are generally necessary to salvation⁴."

It is now time to verify these results by a reference to scripture authority. But as the tide-wave retires before each successive advance, as if to secure the ground which it has won, and gather strength for a renewed effort; so the flow of thought seeks from time to time to retreat upon itself, and survey its past progress, that with collected forces, and confirmed assurance, it may again roll on and forward. More especially in enquiries like the present, where the subject-matter confessedly eludes the grasp of human comprehension—enquiries, the object of which is to acquire a practical possession of the truth by many partial views which mutually correct and complete each other, it is necessary, and therefore excusable, to restate, once

¹ John iii. 7.

² 1 Tim. iii. 16.

³ John vi. 53.

⁴ Church Catechism.

and again, the same position, in different words, and with varied illustrations.

Suffer me then to recur to the pregnant words of St. Paul, to which I have already more than once alluded. "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory¹." It is "the man Christ Jesus" of whom the apostle speaks,—Jesus of Nazareth. The mystery thus enacted in his divine person has become a fact in the history of the world. The idea of human redemption, contained from everlasting in the counsel of the Ancient of days, has been thus unveiled and displayed. Utterly transcending the conception of a finite being, it is proved to be possible, by actually taking place. In the son of Mary, the lowly Nazarene, man *was* redeemed, guilt expiated, sin taken away, divine communion restored, death destroyed, life re-quickened, heaven won. Spiritual unction, inward illumination, perfect righteousness and positive sanctification, atoning sufferings and meritorious sacrifice; the baptism of water, of tears, of blood; a body given, the blood of the New Testament shed; all this was verily and indeed achieved and exemplified in "one man,"—"the only begotten of the Father." "God *was* in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself²." All this, I repeat, is an historical event, of which we have a particular and authentic record in the scriptures of our salvation. But is this all? Is it a *mere* event, existing in the memory alone, as an object of contemplation and belief?—and not rather an eternal truth, converted according to the will of God, into an ever-present fact, the subject of personal participation, lively fruition, and active faith?

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

² 2 Cor. v. 19.

Yes!—blessed be God, that which Christ *was*, he *is*. The Word made flesh is still amongst us. The mystery of the incarnation, revealed in Christ Jesus, remains a matter of near and deep concernment to every believer, as the condition of a diviner world, withdrawn from the world of sense, yet “not far from every one of us¹,” a heavenly and eternal state, in which, through faith in Christ, we truly live, and have our spiritual being. What though the “natural body” of Christ be seated at the right hand of God, not to “appear” till the last day, yet hath he not another body, one with the former after a heavenly manner, yet differing from it, as the thing signified, from its outward symbol, a body super-sensual and eternal, yet not less *real* than that which was born at Bethlehem, and which suffered at Calvary? Was it not of this that he spake when he said of the paschal bread, blessed, broken, and distributed, “Take, eat, this is my body,”—the same of which he had previously declared, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you².”

¹ Acts xvii. 27.

² John vi. 53. “That transubstantiation is absolute no-meaning, I think demonstrable; (*sic.*) and yet I do not hold this the most successful point of the orthodox Protestant controversialists. The question is, what is meant in scripture, as in John vi. by Christ’s body, or flesh and blood? Surely not the visible, tangible, accidental body, that is, a cycle of images and sensations in the imaginations of the beholders: but his super-sensual body, the nomenon of his human nature which was united to his divine nature.”—M.S. note

of S. T. Coleridge. See *Literary Remains*, vol. iii. p. 78.

Of the manner in which “the truth as it is in Jesus” has been, on the one hand, ætherialized into a metaphor, and, on the other hand, “condensed into an idol,” the same author thus speaks in a note to his *Church and State*. “But as the mistaking of symbols and analogies for metaphors^a has been a main occasion and support of the worst errors in Protestantism, so the understanding of the same symbols in a literal, *i. e.* pheno-

^a See *Aids to Reflection*, pp. 198, 254. G. 398.

Now, with the body of Christ, the Church, after a divine and heavenly manner, is declared to be identical; and as with this super-sensual and spiritual body, the invisible and mystical Church is coincident, so by the outward and visible Church is it truly and practically set forth and manifested. And that we may not take this to be spoken figuratively, St. Paul says expressly “we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones¹,”—members not by a formal confederation, but by a vital union; as our Saviour himself prayed, “Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are².” Thus the visible, in relation to the invisible Church, is a sign, a pledge, and an instrument; a sign by which its existence is made known, a pledge by which its blessings are assured, and an instrument by which its operations are performed. In a word, it is a sacrament or outward mystery: and hence a sacramental nature cannot but be diffused through its entire

menal sense, notwithstanding the most earnest warnings against it, the most express declarations of the folly and danger of interpreting *sensually* what was delivered of objects *super-sensual*; this was the rank wilding on which ‘the prince of this world,’ the lust of power and worldly aggrandizement, was enabled to graft, one by one, the whole branchery of papal superstition and imposture. A truth not less important might be conveyed by reversing the image—by representing the papal monarchy as the stem or trunk, circulating a poison-sap through the branches successively grafted thereon, the previous and natural fruit of which was at worst only

mawkish and innutritious. Yet among the dogmas, or articles of belief, that contradistinguish the Roman Catholic from the Reformed Churches, the most important and, in their practical effects and consequences, the most pernicious, I cannot but regard as refracted and distorted truths, profound ideas sensualized into idols, or, at the lowest rate, lofty and affecting imaginations, safe while they remained general and indefinite, but debased and rendered noxious by their application in detail³.”

¹ Eph. v. 30.

² John xvii. 11.

³ Church and State, p. 140.

structure, cannot but characterize its constitutive elements,—its holy persons, places, and things. All serve to reveal and betoken for practical uses, an unseen presence, the informing Spirit, and moving life, not of the Church alone, but of the universal world.

But it is not enough that this divine truth should be imaged in the Church at large; it must be realized in every individual member. The Church is not the body of Christ in the aggregate merely, for Christ in virtue of his omnipresence is entire in every part. Hence, the necessity of a new and spiritual birth, of divine and heavenly food, by which we may undergo and maintain, every man separately, this awful yet glorious transformation. Thus it is that He who is “the first-born among many brethren”¹ claims us for His own. We “have received the spirit of adoption,” and “cry Abba, Father;” we are made “children of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.”² In a word, whatever Christ is, He is for us: whatever He has done, He has done for us: and not only *for* us, as a distant benefactor, but *in* us, as our inward “quickenings spirit.” Sinful and guilty, weak and helpless, dying and miserable, such we are in ourselves; for “in our flesh,” our natural bodies, “dwelleth no good thing.” But in Christ, with whom we are thus mysteriously united, nature is changed for spirit, corruption for incorruption, and weakness for glory. “All things are ours.”³ Such are the triumphs of faith; and the more highly we think of our actual position, the more earnestly we shall strive to “make our calling and election sure.” “Not as though we had already attained, either were already perfect; but we

¹ Rom. viii. 29.

² 1 Cor. iii. 21.

³ Rom. viii. 15—17.

⁴ 2 Pet. i. 10.

follow after, if that we may apprehend that for which also we are apprehended of Christ Jesus¹."

But if a vital change and continued transformation be thus indispensable: if having been born again of the Spirit, it be necessary to "eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the son of man,"—if this be a spiritual operation, by which we are incorporated into the mystical body of Christ, and if the visible Church be that body outwardly represented, then the outward signs by which these operations are visibly denoted and performed, "in mystery and exhibition significative²," are sacraments in the highest sense, symbols of living truths, connatural with that which they represent.

¹ Phil. iii. 12.

² FIELD on *The Church*.

NOTE TO SERMON XIII.

ON RELIGIOUS MYSTERY, REASON, AND FAITH.

WORDS of a sublime or recondite import are so often employed to produce impressions, instead of to convey meanings, and are so commonly received and passed without examination, that at length they are worn out, as well by dishonest practices as by indiscriminate currency. They lose their value, and are no better than blank counters. It then becomes necessary that they should be minted anew, and stamped, as it were, over again with the image and superscription which they originally bore. Thanks to our elder writers, and in the most important cases, to our incomparable liturgy, the dies are preserved, and can be re-applied with ease and certainty. To drop the metaphor, (if a mode of expression, so germane to the matter, and so long attached to it, can be called metaphorical,) the words in question frequently require to be re-defined.

It has so fared with the high religious term *mystical*. Used with a respectful feeling, it often means no more than *vague*, *awful*, and *obscure*: taken contemptuously, it passes for *unreal*, *visionary*, and *phantastic*¹. Hence, it is apt to suggest these meanings, covertly and at unawares, to the prejudice of its proper signification, or else to go

¹ Mystic, taken as a substantive, always partakes of this borrowed sense. A mystic is an enquirer, who, passing the bounds assigned to human knowledge, vainly busies himself with the heights above, or the depths below it: an explorer of undiscoverable secrets, whether in the world of sense, or in that of spirit.

for nothing: and when it is remembered *where* and *how* this term is used in the church service, and to what it refers in sacred scripture, it may perhaps not be deemed superfluous, or foreign to the subject under discussion, if I attempt to recal the precise notion to which it has been affixed, adding a few remarks on the allied terms, mystery and mysterious.

It cannot be necessary to premise, that there are, in matters of religion, many facts of highest concernment, and for which we have the fullest evidence, which are nevertheless insusceptible of sensible experience. These facts, with the notions to which they correspond, are properly called *mystical*: "truths above sense" revealed to "the pure of heart" by the Word; "deep things of God," which the natural man cannot know, because they are "spiritually discerned¹." Hence the necessity of a certain preparation of heart and mind for the reception of divine light, an *initiation*, faintly imaged in those mystic rites of the heathen², (for even by these was this necessity acknowledged,) from which the class of phrases under consideration, has, with the highest possible authority³, been

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10, 14.

² Vere scribit Augustinus de Trin., l. 8, c. 10. Diabolum animas deceptas illusasque præcipitasse, quum *polliceretur purgationem animæ* per eas, quas, *τελετὰς* appellant, transfigurando se in Angelum lucis, per multiformem machinationem, in signis et prodigiis mendacii. August. de Trin. l. 3, c. 10. Vide Hoff. Lex. in voc. *mysterium*.

³ Mark iv. 11. Matt. xiii. 11. Luke viii. 10. 1 Tim. iii. 9, and the Epistles of St. Paul passim. Rev. i. 20, &c. The word *μυστή-*

ρια does not occur in the Gospel by St. John, but the *θεογενεσία*, or *παλιγγενεσία*, were mystic terms, in use before the true doctrine had been stated by our Saviour. John ii. 1—10. Indeed, so striking was the apparent similarity, as to have drawn forth that indignant exclamation from Tertullian: "Omnia adversus veritatem ipsâ veritate constructa esse, operantibus emulationem Spiritibus erroris." But why "adversus veritatem?" Is it not rather a luculent testimony in its favour?

adopted by the Christian Church¹. The word *mystical* therefore is nearly synonymous with the less usual terms supersensual or transcendental, and is frequently supplied by the expressions, “divine and heavenly,” “inward and spiritual,” “invisible,” “ineffable,” “supernatural,” &c.

When these eternal verities, coming forth “from the bosom of the Father,” take their place in a revelation, or religion, they are entitled *mysteries*; while the means through which they are made known, say, rather, the instruments by which they are communicated, as “life-powers” in the spirit of man, whether from without or from within,—(the word preached, or the awakened energies of faith, or, both in one, the given symbols and sacraments under which they are enshrined,)—these means and instruments of grace, in their own high nature

¹ The terms in question had been in use among the Jews long before our Saviour's time, as is evident from the Book of Wisdom, throughout which there prevails a mystical turn both of thought and expression. Thus we meet the phrase *παρέδωκε τοῖς ὑποχειρίοις μυστήρια καὶ τελετάς*, xiv. 15. Here the words are used in a bad sense, as applied to the practices of an incipient idolatry. But in the eighth chapter wisdom is beautifully described as *μύστις τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιστήμης*, instructress in the mysteries of divine knowledge,—a mystic priestess. See also iv. 13, 16. vi. 22. vii. 14, &c., in the Greek, where the words *τελειωθείς*, *τελεσθεῖσα*, *γενέσεως*, *συσταθέντες*, &c., appear to be used in a mystic sense. (The *σύστασις* became afterwards the fourth degree of Christian penances,

“*quæ vox*,” says Hoffman expressly, “*a mysteriis gentium accepta*.” Bingham gives a different account of the term. Book xviii. chap. i. sec. 6.) But the whole work is a *θεωρία ἀληθείας*, of the mystical description, and appears to be a graft of Greek philosophy, on the ancient stock of Hebrew wisdom. The Pythagorean *πάντα μέτρῳ καὶ ἀριθμῷ καὶ σταθμῷ διέταξας* xi. 20, is most noticeable. See HOOKER *Ecc. Pol.* Pref. c. iii. 9. p. 183. Keeble's ed., and COLERIDGE'S *Literary Remains*, Vol. III. p. 21. By the later Fathers mystic terms were lavishly, not to say intemperately employed; till at length that which had originally supplied a happy allusion, adopted to elucidate a new and spiritual doctrine, was assumed as a formal model, and followed out technically in full detail.

mystical, with respect to the “mind contemplating” are properly said to be *mysterious*.

Altogether they organize, and constitute that “fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God,” and hence we may perhaps understand the sublime assertion of St. Paul, that “the manifold wisdom of God” was “made known, even unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places” by the Church, as the outwardness and body of the eternal Word. Thus only is it possible to “comprehend *with all saints* what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge,” and thus be “filled with all the fulness of God.”

We see then, that a mystery, by its definition, is inconceivable under the forms of the human, or any finite understanding. It exists, in the truth of things, as an eternal *law*, by which the several facts or operations in which it is outwardly revealed, are produced: but in the mind itself it is an *idea*. Now as no single fact is an adequate representative of the law by which it is produced, though it may be assumed as its symbol, but by the collation of many facts the law is said to be discovered; so no single notion or conception is sufficient to convey the idea, but by the comparison of many notions it appears

¹ *Ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις*. The doctrine is the same whether it be to bad spirits in the air, the lowest heaven of the Jews^a, or to good spirits in the region of the blessed. In either case the text is conclusive against *ἀγγελοθρησκεία* the worship of that which is not God, or the imputation of His incommunicable attributes to any of His creatures, the highest or the low-

est, the best or the worst. The common interpretation is strengthened by the parallel expression of St. Peter, “which things the angels desire to look into^b,” as into a new revelation, out of and beyond themselves.

^a Eph. iii. 18, 19.

^a Compare Eph. ii. 2, 6. Col. i. 13, 16. ii. 10, 15.

^b 1 Pet. i. 12.

to be suggested'. Yet as the law must be prior to the facts which result from it, so the idea must have existed before the notions of which it is the parent.

Let me illustrate these remarks, and then draw the practical inference. The fall of a stone, the rising of an air-bubble, the motion of a projectile, the ebb and flow of the tides, are not merely unlike, but apparently opposite phenomena. Yet they are all found to arrange themselves under one general law, of which each might be taken as a symbol or representative instance; and in every such instance we say that the law is realized: and by this law the seeming opposition of its several products is at once explained. Now all this is in nature comprehensible, because the truth which is here recognised is taken from the world of sense, and is composed of finite factors.

So, when we say that eternity is divided by the present moment into two equal portions, of which the former is perpetually lengthening by increments taken from the latter, without disturbing the equality,—or that every different point in space is its centre,—or that the half of a given extent is divisible into the same number of parts as the whole,—we have here a number of contradictory notions in which there is no real inconsistency. They are as completely reconciled by the *idea* of infinity, as the facts spoken of above, by the *law* of gravitation. But the truths here recognised are in their nature *incom-*

¹ It is, of course, the latter operation alone which really takes place in the mind. The laws whether of nature or of spirit, can only be recognized as ideas: and similarly, facts, the products of the first, are known only as notions,

the progeny of the second. To determine which of these is the shadow and which the substance, is perhaps the profoundest problem that has ever exercised the mind of man.

prehensible. They cannot be taken in together by the mind, because the factors of which they are composed, are *not* finite; and hence they can only be stated, or brought under the forms of the understanding, in contradictory propositions. Yet the truth is in each case immediately cognizable, and infallibly certain, with the fullest satisfaction to reason.

Apply this reasoning to the revealed truths of religion, and we shall learn what is to be thought of a mystery. It is necessarily incomprehensible, because it is an effluence from the Eternal, and is made up of the infinitudes which from everlasting dwell in Him. When, therefore, it is submitted to the forms of the understanding, as it must be in order to be revealed, it is resolved into opposite notions, and is declared, as in the above cases, by contradictory propositions, which cannot indeed be reconciled, or taken together as a *conception*, but which blend, and are made one, in the *idea* out of which they spring. Let a single instance speak for many. We are told by St. Paul that the marriage, or incorporate union, that is between Christ and His Church "is a great mystery." What are the separate notions involved in this awful truth? First, that Jesus of Nazareth, who died on the cross, was, and is the Christ; and that in Him all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt, and dwells bodily. Secondly, that the same Christ is truly, entirely, and personally present with His people collectively, so that they become one in Him, and are His body. Yet that the same Jesus Christ is present no less truly, entirely, and personally with every separate believer, without confusion in the one case, or division in the other.

It will readily be perceived that this is incomprehensible. To assert that, the same person is wholly and undi-

videdly present, in several times and places at once, involves a contradiction. It is an impossible conception: yet if Christ be God, it follows inevitably, from the idea of Omnipresence, that such *must* be the truth. He must be so present with every one of us, and all that we need to be assured of, is, that He will be with us *graciously* and *savingly*. This is indeed a matter of faith; a knowledge, grafted upon the regenerate will, and only to be imparted by that Spirit of which we are born again. "No man CAN come to Me," saith the Lord, "except the Father which hath sent me draw him'." But is there anything in this contrary to reason? or above it, in any sense incompatible with the free exercise, or unfavourable to the full developement of this our distinctive attribute?

What is reason?

Understanding we have in common with every animal susceptible of impressions, and capable of memory and of comparison. And in man it exercises, as the servant of reason, a proud office, and attains, relatively speaking, a high degree of excellence. Yet as neither this material frame nor the life by which it is naturally stirred, nor the understanding by which its movements are directed "to pleasurable ends," distinguish us *in kind* from the brutes that perish; so those philosophers who ignore the existence of a more excellent nature, "*si ipsi sibi consentiant, et non interdum bonitate naturæ vincantur,*" must reduce us to their level, and involve us in their destiny.

But what is *reason*? Is it not that divine illumination insusceptible of modification or degree, of which God spake (Elohim, the eternal council) when He said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness'?" Not *our* reason then, not *human* reason: but τὸ κοῖνον, the

¹ John vi. 44.

² Gen. i. 26.

constitutive essence of every rational being, and for us, a beam from Him who dwelleth in light unapproachable, the effluence and communication of God!

It is the same with the awful mystery of the Godhead. That the three divine persons whom we severally adore, and by whose several operations we are created, redeemed, and sanctified, are essentially one, and yet have each a distinct subsistence, this union and distinction, with the intercommunication¹ by which they are reconciled, constitute an idea, mystical indeed, and transcendental, for it is made up of the divine infinitudes, and is known only as revealed; not gathered up from the surface of the earth, and put together by “philosophy and vain deceit,” “according to the tradition of men, (the *nihil nisi ab extra* of sensual experience misunderstood and misapplied,) “after the rudiments of the world,” (the impressions and relations of sense, abstracted, and combined,) “and not after Christ;”—an idea, mystic indeed in its nature, and revealed as a mystery, yet not merely in harmony with reason, but the highest form of which it is susceptible. Once awakened, this idea carries with it, like every other, its own evidence, and necessitates all the mysterious doctrines of the Christian faith. It is the fundamental *law*, of which the latter are the *phœnomena*².

¹ *Περίχωρησις*.

² Properly stated, the doctrine of the Trinity is not, as it has been falsely asserted, and as perhaps it is popularly supposed to be, a contradiction in terms. It is not said that three are one, but that three persons are one God. This has been often remarked; but perhaps the difference between the two statements, and the perfect reasonableness of the latter, is not so

commonly perceived. I do not say of the latter that it is comprehensible; I affirm that it is not: but it is perfectly intelligible, we know what is meant; whereas the former is mere nonsense. The union of the eternal three is of one kind, the distinction is of another. The first essential;—there is one essence of the Godhead. The second hypostatical;—there are three divine subsistences.

Once awakened ! but this is a divine work. Only as realized by faith, quickened by hope, and warmed by love, is the idea of a triune Godhead, recognised as the truth which is to make us free. And this kind, it may be well said, goeth not forth except by prayer and fasting ; by prayer, or communion with God, in Christ, through the Spirit ; and by fasting, or the “crucifixion of the flesh with the affections and lusts¹.”

What then is faith ? Not the articulation of dark riddles, with a fettered understanding, and a silenced judgment. Not a vague sentiment of acquiescence in propositions of which we *will* not, *dare* not, ask the meaning, and cannot recognise the truth. “Ye worship what ye know not, said our Lord to the woman of Samaria ; we worship what we know², for salvation is of the Jews³.” It is not to be thought that “the Light which lighteth every man,” came into the world to deprive the true worshippers of this prerogative.

Viewed with reference to its office, faith is defined by a sacred writer, as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen⁴.” But how does it procure these effects ? What constitutes faith, a ground of reli-

We read in the Athanasian creed, (a composition fully as intelligible as it is orthodox,) that as the reasonable soul and flesh are one man, so God and man are one Christ. Here is one mode of union, the hypostatic. That this is possible, and that it leaves the *essential* difference of its components undisturbed, we cannot doubt. *What* it is, it were folly to ask. It is *itself*, that union of the infinite with the finite, and of the common with the particular in *one* subsistence, of which we are conscious in our

own persons, and which, in fact, constitutes our *personality*. Why then should the converse be found unintelligible, or pronounced incredible ? Why should not there be an essential, or as it is commonly expressed (from the Latin) *substantial* union, coincident with a hypostatic, or subsistential distinction.

¹ Gal. v. 24.

² ὁ διδάμεν.

³ John iv. 22.

⁴ Heb. xi. 1.

gious hope, and a demonstration of blessings not merely future, but mysterious? What is it? Not surely a mere abeyance of the mental faculties,—a vacation in the court of reason? There is indeed a hush of feeling, such as is produced by prayer, and the tranquillizing influences of all positive devotion, which is most favourable, as for the perception, so for the acceptance of revealed truth. “Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord,” said the prophet, “for He is raised up out of His holy habitation¹.” But faith itself is an active power in the soul, the organ of heavenly knowledge;—a spiritual discernment, the blessed fruit of obedience, in other words, of a will, in unison with the will of God². What then, let me ask finally, is this awakened insight but the liberation of the reason itself, the divine principle in man, from the bondage of sin, through the mystical incarnation of the Word: one blessed consequence, or, more properly, one practical form of the redemption of the soul by the precious blood that was shed on Calvary, the atoning passion of Jesus Christ, for evermore renewed, applied, and, as it were, effectuated in His Church. Oh! sorrow and shame that this, the everlasting sacrifice and spiritual eucharist, when by appropriate symbols, it had been made the high distinctive festival of the Christian household, should, by the malice of that wicked one, have been converted into a feast of idols, or a play of shadows!

“I am crucified with Christ,” said the apostle, in a passage which we cannot repeat too frequently, or study too deeply; “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the

¹ Zech. ii. 13.

² John vii. 17.

Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me¹.” “*I live*,”—“*Christ liveth*,”—mystically identified in *ONE new life*, by faith!

Faith, therefore, (such is my inference,) is the trustful recognition of the supreme Reason, in mystical union with the human soul,—that Reason, that divine Word, which is the life and light of the regenerate spirit of man. And a *blind* faith, shall we call it a torch unlit, or extinguished, a sealed, or sightless eye? or content ourselves with noting it as a mere blank, a word said or unsaid, the negation of itself,—a seeing without seeing, or an eye wilfully closed, lest if it were open, it should cease to see? Or is it a blind *trust* which is implied? This is indeed an intelligible, but most inapplicable or injurious meaning. We may trust to a medicine, without examination, of which we are merely passive recipients. But what if the remedy prescribed be a *process* demanding an intelligent co-operation on the part of the patient? What if its object be to make him acquainted with his own powers, to rouse his torpid faculties, and confirm by voluntary exercise his palsied vigour? At all events, we must know the physician. But this is a faint parallel. Christ is at once the only Saviour and the alone salvation. He gives Himself; and to know the giver is to know the gift. How then shall we trust either *blindly*?

Reader! if thou hast turned aside from the mysteries of revelation, in the proud consciousness of intellectual endowments, as if the understanding were excluded from the service of religion, and reason banished from the

¹ Gal. ii. 20.

domain of faith; or if, willing and anxious to believe, thou art vexed with secret hauntings of infidelity, fearing to explore the grounds of thy belief, lest that to which thou clingest in humbleness of heart, as alone capable of filling up the craving hollow of thy inward being, though morally accepted, should, upon inquiry, against thy will, be intellectually rejected; know that such scorn, and such apprehension are equally misplaced. Christianity is the truth of God, both in Himself and in His relations to the outer world. It is the truth of that which is the ground of truth, and without which all knowledge stops short and is imperfect. To this fact the whole creation—every creature—groaning together in pain until now (for even now we wait for the *manifestation*) beareth witness.

For the investigation of this truth, Christianity itself provides the means to be adopted, while it points out the *mode* to be pursued. And let it not be thought that this view of the matter is fraught with subtleties, which put religion out of the reach of mankind at large. The truth may be as fully known, if not as far investigated, by the simple way-faring man, as by the sage himself. Some are, indeed, called to a higher exercise of their intellectual powers than others: but for all alike the mysteries of faith are so couched in dogmas, so embodied in symbols, and so involved in prayer; in all these ways so practically, spiritually, and intelligibly set forth, that though the gifts of leisure, mental cultivation, and a thoughtful intellect, make a closer study of the divine perfections both a duty and a necessity, yet the best estate to which the Christian inquirer can attain, when, by the help of God's Spirit, he has vanquished those doubts and difficulties which constitute his peculiar trial, differs in no

essential quality from the earnest faith of a peasant, or the simple piety of a child¹.

¹ Τοῦτο μάλιστα ἐστὶ τὸ ποι-
οῦν τὸ κήρυγμα θαυμαστὸν, ὅτι
τοιαῦτα δόγματα οἷα Πλάτων
καὶ οἱ κατ' ἐκείνον οὐκ ἴσχυσαν
ἐννοῆσαι, εξαίφνης οἱ αλιεῖς τὸ
πάντων ἀμαθέστατον γένος πεί-
θειν καταδέξασθαι. οὐδὲ γὰρ εἰ
φρονίμους ἔπεισαν μόνον, οὕτω
θαυμαστὸν ἦν τὸ γεγονός. ἐπει-
δὲν δὲ οἰκέτας καὶ τίτθας καὶ
εὐνούχους εἰς τοσοῦτον ἤγαγον
φιλοσοφίας, ὥς ἀγγέλοις ἐφα-
μίλλους ποιῆσαι, μεγίστην τῆς
θείας ἐμπνοίας παρεῖχον ἀπο-
δείξιν. Chrys. Hom. vii. in 1 Cor.

The whole Homily is replete with wisdom, inimitably expressed, as might be expected from the *golden mouth* of Chrysostom: but the far-famed style of this illustrious preacher, is quite as remarkable for its popularity, the skill with which the driest researches are rendered attractive, and the more recondite intelligible, as for the flowery graces of composition.

To those who are acquainted with the philosophical writings of S. T. Coleridge, it will not be necessary to point out the sources

from which the preceding slight, and perhaps crude, statement is originally derived. For the errors which it may be found to contain, the author himself is solely responsible. A reference to particular passages would only mislead. It does not pretend to be an abstract of the religious philosophy promulgated by the author's father; much less as a synoptical view of any specific work. It is, in fact, the unconscious reproduction from his own mind (with what alien admixture it is for others to judge) of that teaching with which he himself had been impregnated. It is thus only when we seem to ourselves to initiate that knowledge, for which, in fact, we are wholly indebted to another, that we are made aware of the effects producible by an ideal philosophy quickened into faith; a proof that the power of ideal truth may be propagated by graft, but not by transplantation, may be communicated, but cannot be transferred.

SERMON XIV.
ON THE SACRAMENTS.

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PART II.—BAPTISM.
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JOHN iii. 6.

*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter
into the kingdom of God.*

IN discussing the all-important questions of baptismal regeneration, and eucharistic communion,—questions on which the clear and constant determination of the Church, as represented in its traditional ordinances, stands in noticeable contrast with the varying dogmas of theologians, and the unhappily distracted state of popular opinion, I have begun by a consideration of general principles. Not that I pretend to explain the mysteries of faith, or account for the sacramental forms under which they are couched, on any grounds independent of Scripture, by a reference to moral axioms, to the necessary attributes of God, or to the nature and constitution of the human mind. The principles which I have laid down are themselves confessedly mysterious, and only to be discovered by revelation from the Father of lights. If, notwithstanding, I have seemed to appeal to reason and conscience, (to reason, let me say, in the form of conscience,) be it remembered that the reception of divine truth awakens an insight, or spiritual discernment, by which it is in turn accepted and approved. It is light or illumination, as well as truth, and thus carries with it

its own evidence. This it is which connects knowledge with duty, and makes it the subject of moral responsibility¹. “It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth².”

Let me now state the progress of the argument. From the nature of religion in the abstract, defined as a divine revelation, promulgated through sensible media, and consisting in positive acts, I have inferred that a sacramental character is inherent in all ritual worship: a conclusion forcibly applicable to the Christian religion, the idea of which is the declaration of the invisible, realized in the incarnation of the eternal Word, and involving in its consequences the possible redemption of the human soul, by an incorporate union with the divine nature; a fact mystical in itself, and therefore requiring to be shown by visible tokens, and confirmed by outward seals. But, further, the idea of an incorporate union resolves itself into two factors, the origination of a new nature, in connexion with a divine source, and the keeping up, or perpetual renewal, of this connexion,—birth and life. The implanted seed must have its proper nutriment: heavenly itself, it must be watered with the dew of heaven. The engrafted branch must “partake of the root and fatness of the olive-tree³.” And what is true of one, is true of all: so that it matters not whether we speak of one individual, or of many, the Omnipresent Being with whom they are united, so dwelling in each, as to make all one in Him, and every portion a perfect whole. Thus we see that the great Christian mystery—the union of the soul with Christ—involves two particular mysteries, a spiritual birth, and spiritual communion. Now the

¹ John i. 4, 5; iii. 20, 21; vii. 17; viii. 12.

² 1 John v. 6.

³ Rom. xi. 17.

outwardness and visibility of a revealed religion, requiring that these should be made known, no less to the individual in whom they take place, than to the Church with which he is incorporated, we look for some sensible token authentically attached to each, and carrying with it the seal of divine assurance, by which the requisite publicity may be obtained. Such authentic tokens we have in baptism and the supper of the Lord.

A comparison between the Jewish and Christian dispensations gives precisely the same result. And, although the characteristic ordinances of the latter are fully explicable on independent and general grounds, so that the Old Testament is required rather to interpret the letter than to set forth the spirit of the New, to explain the allusions rather than to justify the doctrine of the evangelical writers; yet as the two are historically connected, and are, indeed, to a certain extent, and in a certain sense continuous and identical, it cannot but be highly instructive to consider them in their mutual relations. The subject is much too extensive to be more than touched upon at present. Suffice it to remark that, while the observances of the Mosaic ritual have a sacramental character throughout, a mysterious presence having brooded over the entire land of promise, that veiled itself in a thousand forms, all pointing upward, while they beckoned onward, whispering to the ear of faith a deeper meaning and a sublimer hope than any which they spake aloud; two special appointments stand out in bold relief as symbols, in the most general sense, of the peculiar position occupied by the chosen race, with its attendant privileges; two mystic rites, by one of which they were made, and by the other kept, the children of God their Father, and the people of God their

King. With these, the Christian rites of baptism and the eucharist are, by the link of historic continuity above-mentioned, brought into immediate connexion. Similarly constitutive, and therefore equally pre-eminent, we cannot but anticipate a marked conformity in each case between the elder ordinance, and that by which it was visibly displaced and succeeded. And although we shall not trust to analogy alone in filling out the description of existing appointments, which carry with them their own recommendation, and explain their own intention, yet within certain limits it may fairly be alleged to determine that which is ambiguous, and illustrate that which is obscure.

Of the paschal sacrifice and accompanying festival (the latter of the two rites in question), I shall have to speak hereafter. The former, circumcision, is entitled by St. Paul a sign, and a seal. A sign it was to *distinguish* the chosen people from the idolatrous heathen, to *commemorate* the original covenant between God on the one part, and the Father of their race on the other; to indicate the necessity of a *moral* reformation, and the laying aside of carnal impurities; to *initiate* the worshippers of Jehovah in the religion which they were henceforth to profess; to *guard* their persons, as with a breastplate of heavenly temper, from the assaults of evil spirits; lastly, to *incorporate* in one sacred *polity* themselves, and their children, the stranger, who, from whatever cause, was to be enrolled in their community. Thus it was a sign. A seal it was to *ratify* the charter of their privileges, and to *assure* them of God's favour and protection¹. And such ostensibly is baptism, a sign

¹ Duplex erat circumcisionis in- | ut sigilli vicem præstaret. Signum
stituendæ ratio, nempe ut signi et | erat distinctivum, memorativum,

and a seal. And if, without overstepping the precedent of evangelical Scripture, we may follow out the parallel ;— if the great Christian family be the Israel of God ; if Christ be the spiritual Abraham, the Father of our race, and we his seed ; if the washing of water be an emblem of purification, no less lively than that which it was appointed to supersede ; if the service of the temple be continued in the substance, though abolished as a shadow ; if God's people be still surrounded by unseen enemies ; and if the Church be a sacred polity in which Jehovah still reigns supreme ; if there be still a precious charter, offered by God on the one part, and accepted by man on the other ;—then is baptism now what circumcision was before, a sign to *mark* our profession, and *distinguish* us from heathen men ; to remind us of the solemn compact announced at the waters of Jordan between God in heaven, and Him who is indeed the Father of the faithful ; to depict, in a figure, the child-like innocence of a spirit washed in the cleansing blood of Christ ; to commence a holy state of discipline, with hopes and prayers that what remains of life may be conformed to this beginning ; to be worn and cherished as a heavenly amulet against the assaults of fleshly lust, the wily malice of our ghostly enemy, and the fascinations of a wicked world ; lastly, a sign by which, “as by an instrument,” we are adopted into the family and naturalized as the subjects of Christ. In such various manners may this holy rite be thought to fulfil the office of a sign. But, farther, baptism is a seal ; God's seal by which we

figurativum, initiativum, <i>προφυλακτικόν</i> , politicum. Sigillum et sacramentum erat ex parte Dei promittentis, simul et hominum profitentium. Adeo ut in	circumcissione quasi viveret, moveret, atque esset Judaismus.— <i>Collected from Spenc. de Leg. Heb. lib. i. chap. iv. sec. 1.</i>
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are assured of His gracious promises, and *our* seal, by which we pledge ourselves to perform the annexed conditions.

Such then is the analogy between baptism and circumcision, cast in the same mould, they exhibit ostensibly the same characteristic features. Lest, however, it should be said that this is a mere accommodation, not a real correspondency, I leave the presumption, bequeathed by the elder economy, to its more than fosterchild; the legacy, rich though it be, of speaking forms and heavenly imagery; the still uncounted beauties of holiness, found by the young inheritor in God's ancient sanctuary—not "on Mount Sinai which gendereth to bondage'," but on the holy hill of Zion, the type of Christian liberty—I leave this sacred treasure to lie, as it were, at interest. Not till Christianity has proved itself self-supported and independent, not till it has exhibited the wealth which it derives from other sources, shall it appear in its hereditary state, decked in priestly robes, and chaunting temple-melodies. We would not *seem* to STEAL a blessing!

I speak of the present time, the aspect in which we are to view the spiritual religion of Christ, at this latter day. In the course of history a reverse order must have obtained. Judaism having brought the infant Christianity, as a godfather, to the baptismal font, and standing pledged before the world on behalf of his spiritual child,—the witness of its visible election, and temporary surety for the performance of its covenanted obligation,—trained it for a while in the service of the synagogue, till, in the fulness of time, it pleased the great Head of the Church to spread over it His benedictory and grace-imparting

¹ Gal. iv. 24.

hands, *confirming* it solemnly with heavenly signs and spiritual unction.

From this second baptism the Church acquired a true, independent, and personal subsistence, with which it immediately prepared “to go to the Gentiles;” and if the dress which it still wore, and the language which it still spoke, carried with them a perpetual memorial of the land, in which the lot of its earthly nativity had been cast, this might, as occasion required, be laid aside, modified, or changed; again to be resumed when opportunity served,—its fitting, natural, and most graceful attire,—but not itself.

It now remains to collate the doctrine, thus generally collected from Scripture principles, with the authoritative examples of Holy Writ, alleging in each case, first, the precepts of our Saviour and His apostles; secondly, the resulting practice of the primitive saints. And, first, of baptism.

I have said that the redemptive process, as it takes place in the soul of man, implies, first, that vital change from the old man to the new, which is properly entitled regeneration; and that from the nature of the Christian religion, as an outward dispensation, involving the union of many in one, we look for some authentic mark by which this essential mystery may be individually and generally certified, by which every man may be assured of his own position, and the Church be made acquainted with her own members. Are we then to rest on this presumption? Are we to trust to the mere analogy of faith? Far from it. God forbid that we should place our dependancy in so concerning a matter on any grounds, however probable, short of divine revelation. Let the *idea* be shown to correspond to the *fact*. An

awakened sense of the sublime harmony, by which every separate manifestation of the divine counsel is linked together and blended into one, cannot, indeed, but be useful as a mental preparation. It cannot but exalt our appreciation, and enrich our conceptions of revealed truth; yet must these be tested in all important particulars by the text of Scripture.

The doctrine of the new birth, and its connexion with baptism, may, in the first instance, be derived from the creed of the Church to which we belong. Here is a first presumption in its favour. It may be traced to the primitive Church, and the higher we ascend the stronger will be our persuasion. It may appear reasonable on Scriptural principles; but in whatever way it may have been rendered probable, it must be *proved* by the written Word.

Now as to the mere question of fact, the evidence that baptism was employed as an initiative rite, under the Christian dispensation at its earliest dawn, with the sanction of its divine author, is too clear to require discussion. "Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples," is the testimony of an evangelist¹. That by His express command the same practice was subsequently continued by the apostles, is equally evident. "Go ye—teach all nations—baptizing them," are His own words². That this command is of perpetual obligation, not a hint appearing in Scripture to the contrary, seems at first sight equally indisputable. "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism," is the language of an apostle when enumerating the essentials of the Christian scheme³; and again the same apostle specifies the doctrine of baptism as part of "the foundation"—the word of the beginning of Christ⁴.

¹ John iv. 2. ² Matt. xxviii. 19. ³ Eph. iv. 5. ⁴ Heb. vi. 1.

These passages sufficiently intimate the high importance and permanent validity of this solemn ordinance.

Nevertheless, it has been argued by men not generally deficient in piety or learning, that the use of baptism, as originally instituted, was in a great measure local, and *altogether* temporary; that it was at the time, a wise and merciful concession to Jewish habits and prepossessions, but that it ought to have been discontinued, as tending to formalism when the Hebrew polity was destroyed, and Christianity no longer propagated from Palestine as a centre. In a word, that it is, at best, an indifferent matter, and has long ceased to be a binding observance. What a striking instance of the inadequacy of mere texts, however cogent, to establish any truth in the minds even of sincere inquirers, which they believe to be against the analogy of revealed truth, and the dictates of an awakened conscience. And indeed, if Christianity were not intended to be promulgated in an outward and historical Church, there could be no need of a formal instrument to enroll or engraft its members. And again, if this instrument were *merely* formal, the Church, of which it is as it were the key, would be merely outward, and would have no necessary connexion with vital Christianity. In either case it would not be easy to defend the use of baptism from the most serious objections.

True it is that Scriptural authority so clear as that which I have adduced, (to say nothing of primitive creeds, and Catholic observance,) ought to have led these objections to a different conclusion. I mean, that it should have led them to re-examine the grounds of their opinion; for I am far from intimating that any man can be obliged to do violence either to reason or to conscience. The clear evidence which thus exists of the institution of

baptism, as a permanent ordinance, ought to have been taken as a proof that any hypothesis inconsistent with this fact must be unsound; that the Church of Christ cannot but have been meant to be visibly defined, and that the mode in which it was to be entered, could not have been merely formal. And if the argument from Scripture were left in this state, it would surely carry conviction to an unbiassed mind. Christ *did* ordain visible baptism as an instrument of admission into His Church; therefore the Church itself is a vital institution. The ordinance of Christ cannot but be holy and beneficial; therefore baptism is a holy rite, and productive of great "benefits." It does not necessarily or properly lead to formalism, which is most *unholy*; it is not a *mere* form.

But if this be so, we may surely expect some more explicit information in Scripture on so important a subject. So, leaving the question of fact, let us now consult the oracles of God, as to the nature and use of baptism. Let us but prove *directly* from the sacred text that this ordinance is a sacrament, or formal instrument of grace, (a conclusion to which we have already arrived by another path,) and every objection to its use, every doubt as to its validity, vanishes at once.

With this view, let us recur to the sacred text. And here we are forcibly reminded that John the Baptist, the herald of the Messianic kingdom had already employed emblematic washing avowedly as the shadow and prelude of another baptism, to be administered with far higher authority, and attended with far mightier powers. And although it is an inward purification, a spiritual and fiery cleansing, which was announced by the second Elias, (this being the point of contrast between his own baptism, and that which was to supersede it,) yet the outwardness of

Christian baptism being admitted as a fact, the declaration above alluded to, throws great light upon its inward nature.

Again, we cannot but remember that our Saviour was Himself baptized. This, in the first instance, may have been done out of respect to an existing institution: but when we find that a formal unction from the Holy One immediately followed, accompanied by a declaration of Sonship, solemnly pronounced by God Himself, in favour of His well-beloved, can we doubt that the baptism of Jesus became an example and pattern of that which He subsequently enjoined upon his followers? Are we not confirmed in the belief that the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, father, was henceforth to be bestowed in connexion with the "laver of regeneration?"

But it is principally from the Gospel of St. John that we learn the true character, as of the Christian mysteries in general, so in particular of this holy ordinance, and remarkably from that sublime disclosure vouchsafed by our Lord to Nicodemus at the commencement of His public ministry, recorded in the third chapter of St. John's Gospel. If this divine discourse refer to baptism, it would appear to set the main question at rest for ever. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." These words decide the point, and it only remains to determine with what limitation, if any, they are to be understood, and what is their practical application. A few commentators, with Calvin at their head, have opposed this interpretation. On the other hand, (if the point were to be settled by authority,) it would be easy to produce a cloud of witnesses. But it will be more satisfactory to try the question on its own merit; and as the force of particular expressions must be determined in a great measure by the connexion in which they occur, I

shall, for the sake of convenience, extract the entire passage—perhaps the most suggestive, and among the most important in the Scriptures. “Jesus answered, and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things’?”

From this we gather—first, that regeneration is a necessary pre-requisite for admission into that happy state here entitled the kingdom of God: and while the spiritual nature of both is fully admitted, it must be remembered that the latter, certainly in this passage, if not in every other, is to be taken in connexion with its visible exponent, the Church, or pastoral fold of Christ on earth. For so it is expressly declared—“If I have told you *earthly* things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things’?” The kingdom of God therefore, which the unregenerate can neither see nor enter, is an invisible estate, visibly represented. And if in respect of its invisible character, it cannot be so

¹ John iii. 3—10.

² John iii. 12.

much as seen, without a vital and spiritual transformation, so in respect to its visible character, it cannot be entered without some outward and formal instrument. Accordingly, our blessed Lord reiterates his assertion as to the necessity of regeneration with this further explanation, “Verily I say unto thee, that except a man be born of *water* and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” And without recurring to suppositions, to which a shade of uncertainty may attach, it may be confidently concluded that in the expression “born of water,” *some* allusion to visible baptism, or emblematic washing, is intended. But in the awe-inspiring relation of our Saviour, it is a new birth by *water and spirit*, which is pronounced essential; a new birth by *spiritual* water, or spirit, having water for its appointed emblem and symbol; its emblem, inasmuch as the spiritual effect is herein, as it were sensibly depicted; and its symbol, inasmuch as this effect is hereby virtually conveyed.

And with this may be compared the previous declarations of the Baptist,—“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance¹,” “but there standeth one among you whom ye know not²,” “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire³,” even with that Holy Spirit, the first effusion of which on the day of Pentecost was marked and symbolized by tongues of fire, multiplied and divided so as to light on every man: that spiritual fire by which not the “laver of regeneration” solely, but the whole body of the Church, with all its functions, should thenceforth be quickened and informed.

Yet, “the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, yet cannot tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born

¹ Matt. iii. 11.² John i. 26.³ Luke iii. 16.

of the Spirit.” A divine and super-sensual operation, we perceive its effects, and confidently infer the reality of its agency: but we cannot detect its mysterious origin, or follow it in its unseen course. Suffice it for us to be assured, that “whosoever is born of water,” is, under certain conditions, “born of water and of the Spirit,” and that without this second birth, thus vitally and formally imparted, we cannot appreciate the nature, or so much as enter the precincts of that kingdom of God, which is itself in a large sense, “an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.”

Such then is baptism—both a vital and a formal act, with a reference respectively to the invisible and visible Church: the condition under which these two characters are united and rendered identical, being faith. “Go ye,” said our Lord to his apostles, “into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned¹.”

This is the course to be pursued. The Christian message is to be delivered. All who receive it are to be baptized. A divine gift is hereby communicated; they are made spiritual persons: and their belief thus manifested, having the power of truth, and working by love, takes the form of righteousness, and issues in salvation. It is therefore absolutely incumbent on the Church to offer baptism, and on every individual convert (much more every member born in her household, and nursed upon her bosom), to receive it. It is not indeed said, or implied, that every one who is not baptized, will be condemned. “By grace are ye saved through faith²,” is the apostolic doctrine, and it is no where asserted that grace, or “the

¹ Mark xvi. 15, 16.

² Eph. ii. 8.

gift of God," *cannot* be bestowed or matured, except it be thus visibly sealed. But "he that believeth not is condemned already"; and to refuse or neglect baptism (unless through invincible ignorance) is infidelity. Baptism therefore, formal baptism, in the words of our Church, "is *generally* necessary to salvation.

Again, a voluntary entrance into a new state, supposes an abandonment and rejection of the old. This again implies that change of purpose which is expressed in the term repentance. "Repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand," was "the voice of him that cried in the wilderness'." This was the baptism of water. "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost'." This was the baptism of water and of the Spirit. But repentance was implied in both. Repentance, therefore, being involved in that trustful acceptance of the Gospel which has been described as the pre-requisite of baptism, forms, with faith, the conditions on which its *eventual* efficacy depends.

It is unnecessary to compare with these statements the doctrine of the English Church, as expressed in her Articles, Catechism, and baptismal service, from all of which it appears, that baptism, implying actual regeneration, is the instrument by which we are visibly engrafted into Christ's Church and family, faith and repentance being required on the part of the recipient, as the condition of its spiritual efficiency. To be effectual, it must be "rightly received'."

Here, however, a question properly arises as to the sense in which these conditions are said to be required. Not, surely, as if by any inherent merit, or antecedent

¹ John iii. 18.

² Matt. iii. 2.

³ Acts ii. 38.

⁴ Article xxvii.

congruity, they of themselves procured sacramental grace, of which, in fact, they are rather to be considered as products than as causes. The gift of regeneration is purely unmerited, purely originative. But they are required from adult converts, (of whom alone in the passages of Scripture cited in this behalf is the question,) to do away the impediments which a will mysteriously diseased, and by habits of actual sin increasingly perverted, oppose to the reception of the remedy by which its own disorders are to be rectified. They prove that the divine work is already so far commenced, as to bring the recipient under the operation of the healing process, by the mercy of God provided in the Church, under the Physician of souls; to whose benignant and effectual care the convert desires to be committed. Upon this, baptism is administered, as a sign and pledge of the mercy herein conditionally promised, and thus far actually bestowed, that the individual baptized is placed *in a state of salvation* which, nevertheless, he is required and empowered to work out for himself, and this “with fear and trembling.” “He that believeth and is baptized *shall* be saved.” If his professions are insincere, or merely formal, nothing is effected. He is still “in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity¹.” Thus far he has done nothing, except to purchase to himself greater condemnation. Yet he is brought within the fold of Christ; he is surrounded by the means of grace: and if hereafter he should “come to himself,” if he should be brought, by penitence and faith, to assert his actual position, as a baptized member of the Church, we may conclude that he has been *all along* “born of water and Spirit;” that the seed of God, originally implanted,

¹ Acts viii. 23.

has remained in his soul, and now at length begins to put forth its shoots heavenward. In no individual instance can we entertain a hope, that such will be the blessed result; nay, in the case of sinister views and conscious hypocrisy, we may well apprehend the signal and immediate judgment of God; or, at least, a final impenitency and judicial hardness of heart. Even in this last and worst case, however, we are not warranted in pronouncing a sentence of absolute reprobation. A hope was held out by the apostle to Simon Magus. But when these darker shades of guilt are absent, when baptism has been received formally, under the influence of circumstances, with an imperfect consent of the will, why should we doubt that the mercy of heaven has been vouchsafed in the manner above described, that is, by subsequent effectuation, to ten times ten thousand of the saints who are now in bliss?

To take the extreme case of armies, tribes, and nations baptized in obedience to the bidding and example of their chief. How, it may be asked, are these benefitted by their baptism? Individually, immediately, presently, not at all. Unaccompanied with real conversion their baptism leaves them, as it finds them, impenitent and unbelieving—Christians in name, heathens in fact. But trace the process a step further. The multitude, thus formally enrolled among the faithful, are placed at once under the influence of Church ordinances. The dedication of themselves to Christ's service, which they have vowed at the font, though in the first instance involuntary, proves, in many instances, a willing and cordial allegiance. The preacher is sent; they hear; they believe; they congregate for worship and communion; they grow in grace. I am far from insinuating

that catechetical instruction ought not to have preceded instead of following baptism. In most cases it has done so, though to a less extent than would be required by modern views. But looking at the event as it has actually been ordered by the providence of God, can we refuse to admit, that from the baptism thus administered multitudes have dated the *commencement* of their spiritual life, though years may have elapsed before they learnt to assert, and by faith to realize, their high privileges? They were disciplined, baptized, taught, I will not fear to say, in *general* accordance with the revealed design of Christ; and, however imperfectly the work may have been carried forward, however its progress may have been retarded, negatively by the insufficiency of the system subsequently pursued, and positively by the corruptions with which it was infected, however mixed the results may have long continued, and, alas! still remain, from “this beginning,” (not a mere epoch, but under God a true original,) we are to date our own Christianity and that of our forefathers, with all that the Church has been and done, from its first plantation to the present day. And though the conversion of our pagan ancestors may at first have been little else than baptism, we have no right to call it nominal; for those who began with baptizing went on to evangelize. Thus the torch of Christianity having been lit from the fire of heaven, though for a while it may have shed but a feeble light, soon brightened into a steady flame, which, after many variations, has eventually diffused itself into the illumination which we now enjoy¹.

¹ The history of a nation may, in this respect, be compared to that of an individual. Baptized in infancy, with everything yet to learn, the faith of its childhood is naturally childish, simple, and unsuspecting. Ardent and sincere in youth, yet liable to extrava-

And this leads me, as may perhaps have been anticipated, to the question of infant baptism, the importance of which demands a separate examination. Enough, however, has been said to prove that, though the circumstances under which baptism is administered to an infant and an adult convert from heathenism, present a remarkable difference, (beautifully illustrated in the corresponding offices in the English Liturgy,) yet that this difference is entirely in favour of the former. The sacrament, indeed, remains precisely the same in the two cases ; its validity absolute, its significancy unchanged, its eventual benefit neither more nor less contingent. The sacrament is the same, and the conditions under which it is rightly received differ only in appearance. Let it never be forgotten that baptism, as the symbol of regeneration, marks the beginning, not the attainment of spiritual life : the cause, not the effect, conversion inchoate, not conversion complete ; a preliminary willingness, or, to trace the mystery a step backward, an absence of unwillingness, produced divinely by the free mercy and good providence of God. Whatever is more than this, the first, the very first movement of the moral being, at

gance ; in manhood sober and rational, yet too often deficient in fervour ; in old age returning again to a senile childhood, with something of the affectionateness, and more of the puerility of its infant creed. Such at least are the conclusions of past experience. They bear this sad, but useful lesson, not to trust to the energies of the human mind, or the influence of human institutions, as if they had a natural tendency to permanent and continuous improvement. Their na-

tural course is a cycle, once and but once accomplished. Birth, growth, maturity, old age, and death, ever dying ; not the euthanasia of the Phoenix, nor pregnant, as in that beautiful allegory, with its own renewal and palingenesis, but a death indeed. How far this has been already controlled by the divine life that came down from heaven, and whether it will ultimately be over-ruled, so as to consist with an indefinite earthly progress of the human species at large, is another question.

the instant of its birth, is *grace*, sealed, represented, revealed in the outward washing. Why then are faith and penitence required in the adult as preliminary conditions of baptism, except to indicate that childlike reciprocity, that negation of positive impediment, the perfect image of which is seen in the cradled nursling by the free-loving mercy and providential care of heaven, brought to the "laver of regeneration"?

To this state in after life we can but approximate; and adult baptism must suppose, or more properly supply a foregone conclusion, antedating itself, if I may so speak, that it may synchronize and coincide with the true, the heavenly nativity of the soul, and so conduct us to that better infancy of heart, in respect of which, "as new-born babes, we desire the sincere milk of the Word, that we may be fed therewith". At the risk, however, of being deemed obscure, and perhaps paradoxical, I may not dissemble my conviction that it is not lawful¹ to subject spiritual operations, the issues of the Infinite and Eternal, to logical inferences, or to comprise them in definite statements. They are made known to us in Scripture, either as visual symbols, which we are bound to accept as their appointed representatives, or else in verbal formularies, true to the extent in which they are intended to

¹ Without faith there is no power of repentance: without a commencing repentance no power to faith: and that it is in the power of the will either to repent, or to have faith, in the Gospel sense of the words, is itself a consequence of the redemption of mankind, a free gift of the Redeemer; the guilt of its rejection, the refusing to avail ourselves of

the power, being all that we can consider as exclusively attributable to our own act. — COLERIDGE'S *Aids to Reflection*. p. 313.

² 1 Pet. ii. 2.

³ Possibility as coincident with the divine will and permission, is expressed in Latin by the word *fas*, to which we have no term exactly equivalent.

be taken; practically true, but not involving the *whole* truth, which is essentially transcendent, and cannot be verbally enunciated. And of these there are many, each a ray from the same central light, but severally refracted, that they may serve the purposes of mental vision, by the atmosphere through which they pass; and this, (if the illustration may be allowed me,) at different angles; yet upon a *general* comparison these deviations disappear, and their convergency is ascertained. So are we conducted to their common origin, "the truth as it is in Jesus¹." The divine act of regeneration, though in one sense complete at the moment when it takes place, yet, in another sense, (consistent with the former only "after a divine and heavenly manner,") it is perpetually originated, a continual *first*. That this *must* be possible, and that it is an attribute of Deity, we know from the eternal generation of the second Person in the Godhead; "Thou art my Son, *this day* have I begotten Thee²." Hence, regeneration is continued, so to speak, in the soul under the form of *renovation*, of which it would be a sort of presumption to speak in other terms than those of the Collect for the Sunday after Christmas day; "Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit." The misunderstanding of this principle has led to an error in doctrine, which might have been regarded in no worse light than as an inconvenient and somewhat irreverent change of established phraseology, but from its unfortunate bearing on the question of baptism. A divine change being of course assumed to be in every case indispensable, and many religious persons, perhaps a majority of those distinguished for eminent piety, expe-

¹ See Note to Sermon xiii.

² Heb. i. 5.

riencing this change, or more properly, its effect, with peculiar liveliness on some particular occasion, from which they date ever after their restoration to the favour of God, this self-constituted epoch is identified with that new or heavenly birth, without which a man cannot see the kingdom of God. And if by this no more were meant, than that the emotions experienced were of spiritual origin, and an evidence to the individual of his own regenerate state, such an opinion might be left undisturbed. Though in itself but a fallible indication, yet when tested by outward renovation of life, it would be an equal want of charity and judgment to treat these so called experiences as merely delusive. For something similar to this *must* occur to the children of God *day by day*. It is the struggle of the spirit with the flesh; the law of the inner man at war with the law that is in our members. And what wonder if this contest, having on some one occasion been attended with a distincter consciousness, and blessed with a more signal victory, the soul should then be placed, as it were, on vantage ground, and fight the good fight with higher resolution ever after? But when, from a misunderstanding of our Saviour's words to Nicodemus, it is contended that such must be the experience of *every* man, sensibly felt and distinctly remembered; or when, by the help of their own confessions, it is affected to cull the regenerate portion of the Church from the remainder, and this by a process which leaves behind a number of the humblest, purest, wisest of Christ's little ones, passing over their affectionate, single-minded, and consistent piety, because it is habitual, a second nature so early and so well engrafted upon the first, under such happy influences of cultivation, soil, and climate, as to have left no scar, nothing to mark the point

of separation between the old bark from the new; or to vary the metaphor, because it has flowed in a gradually swelling, but placid stream, from infancy to age; when these are the inferences, so false and so uncharitable, which are drawn from this opinion, it becomes necessary to show that in deflecting from the orthodox standard, it has become both theoretically false, and practically mischievous. This, however, is not all, or the worst. By limiting regeneration to a casualty of after life, at best the *manifestation* of a vital principle, it nullifies baptism, reducing it from a sacrament,—the sign and seal of a divine energy, not otherwise to be traced to its source, though in its effects most noticeable,—reducing it, I say, from a sacramental initiation to a mere introductory form, which cannot be neglected without presumption, and which yet can hardly be observed without superstition; and this, whether it is used to recommend the infant to the congregation at large, or the converted adult to a segregated portion, the Church in deed, as opposed to the professing Christian world.

But to resume. The true doctrine leads to this important maxim. That which, by the mercy of God, we *have*, we are still bound, and irresistibly impelled, to pray for. That which we *are*, we pray to *be*, and by praying, continually become. That which clear revelations, visible providences, authentic sacraments, assure us that we have been made, we are commanded, encouraged every way obliged, each man for himself, to realize. This, which describes our Christian state in general, is the key-note to the English Liturgy (herein essentially Catholic), in all its parts, and more than explains that seeming inconsistency, to which an objection has been taken, as if it spoke the language neither of saint nor

sinner. How should it be otherwise, when every Christian is, and must be in one sense, both, and in another sense, neither?

With reference to the present subject, we come to this conclusion, that the divine gift of regeneration, though it can never be lost, (the second birth can no more be annulled than the first,) is yet continually to be cherished; though it has undoubtedly been received, it is still an object of daily and hourly prayer. It was Christians, not Heathens, members of the Church of Christ, addressed in this character, and on this supposition, men already regenerate by baptism, and supposed to be regenerate indeed, whom St. Paul exhorted to “put off the old,” and “put on the new man¹”; not in the way of reproof, or as a *special* necessity, but as a striving, necessary at all times, and for all. One apostle declares that “old things are passed away; behold all things are become new²:” and another, “looks for a new heaven, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness³.”

¹ Eph. iv. 22—24.

² 2 Cor. v. 17.

³ 2 Peter iii. 13. On the same principle is to be explained the difficult verse in the first epistle of St. John. “Whosoever is born of God,” (or is regenerate,) “doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God^a.” He speaks of the inner man, Christ that liveth in us, our second, better, truer self, as fully realized. This is what we are, and this, nevertheless, is what we must ever pray to become. For there is, as the apostle well knew, another man, not yet so put off, but that it remains to try

^a 1 John iii. 9.

and exercise the former, as the Israelite and the native Canaanite dwelt together, at variance, in the land of promise. That no supralapsarian perfection, no actual impeccability is contemplated by the apostle, is evident from his own words. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father^b.” Evidently meaning the regenerate; for “we” or “ye” are used throughout this epistle, in the highest and most encouraging sense. “We are of God.” “Greater is he that is in *you*, than he that is in the world^c.” Yet “if *we* say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us^d.” Well,

^b 1 John ii. 1.

^c 1 John iv. 4.

And though, with exquisite propriety, we are taught to pray for this further gift, under the name of renovation, yet it is in effect the same. To be "*transformed* by the renewing of our mind¹," is to undergo an absolute and vital change; only it is not birth, not the first *origin* of change. This, indeed, is pre-supposed, and could not otherwise be prescribed or commanded. Our Saviour does not say, be ye regenerate, as if the accomplishment

and scripturally is it said in the ninth Article "that this (original) infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated."

Compare with this the equally difficult passage in the sixth Chapter of Hebrews, which may be regarded as the converse of that which we have been considering. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance^e."

The regenerate cannot sin, or if they do, they cannot be saved, because sin would, in this case, amount to an utter extinction of the saving principle in man. Not that a logical consistency between the two passages is possible, for they are disparate manifestations of the same ineffable truth. The practical inference, however, is evident, and most edifying—in the one case for encouragement, in the other for warning. The declaration of St. John amounts to this. Hope everything, for there is that

^d 1 John i. 8.

^e Heb. vi. 4—6.

within you, which, if called into exercise, cannot but be consonant with the will of God, from whom it is derived. That of St. Paul reverses the picture. Fear every thing, for in exact proportion as the divine principle shall have been developed in your nature, if, notwithstanding, the power of evil prevails, it will be difficult, and eventually impossible, to regain the mastery. The sublime revelation of our Saviour is to the same effect: and if not more alarming, is, if possible, more vividly and affectingly awakening. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none^f," &c.

The sixteenth Article on Sin after Baptism, is a proper corrective to the false inferences, of a practical kind, which have been drawn from this doctrine, as well by Supralapsarian Calvinists, as by the favourer of Romish expiation, whether penance before death, or purgatory after. In the English Church it ought to have served as a prophylactic^g.

¹ Rom. xii. 2.

^f Matt. xii. 43—45.

^g See FIELD'S *Church*, p. 257.

lay with us, but “Ye must be born again.” Regeneration is a gift,—the grace of *baptism*. Of renovation I shall speak hereafter. To trim a flame already lit, to feed a life already given, this it is to be renovated, and for this we eat the *bread* of life.

So is our baptism for ever more renewed: and thus we see that while the validity of this sacrament rightly administered is absolute, for this is given us by promise, its efficacy is conditional, depending in every case on actual penitence and conscious faith, whether the subject be an infant, or an adult, and just in the same way. It is thus that baptism is realized, *whenever*, or *however* it has been received; and thus must it be renewed, not once, or twice, nor after a relapse, but continually. The practical benefit of these views need not be pointed out. Sincerely entertained, they render it impossible, on the one hand, to profane the sacrament, on the other hand, to idolize the form.

NOTE TO SERMON XIV.

ON BAPTISMAL REGENERATION, AS TAUGHT IN OUR
SAVIOUR'S DISCOURSE TO NICODEMUS.

A COMPLETE analysis of this most important passage, in which, as I believe, is revealed the primal mystery of the Christian faith, and by which the Church has explained the first of her two essential, and constitutive sacraments¹, would lead me far beyond any limits, and is not necessary for my present purpose. Considered from the point of view in which I have endeavoured to place the subject, it will be accepted without difficulty in its apparent sense, as indicating the necessity of a mysterious change in the condition of the human soul, here described as a new or heavenly birth; a change effected by a divine influence recognised in baptism under the emblem of water, "the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." And long experience has proved that there is nothing in the text of Scripture to correct opinion, or to control it, independently of the light in which it is studied. The following remarks may, however, evince that this explanation is self-consistent, and therefore tenable on its own grounds.

And first we must suppose the seemingly abrupt announcement of our Lord to have been addressed to Nicodemus, in answer to some question put by the latter, (or perhaps only intended, a thought understood before it

¹ See Office of Adult Baptism in the *English Liturgy*.

was expressed,) touching the person of the Messiah, and the kingdom which He was expected to establish. Our Saviour assures him, with solemn emphasis, that “a man must be born again,” or he cannot see that “kingdom of God,” which was the object of so much anxious speculation. The Jewish Rabbi wonders at the reply. To be born again (or from above, which equally implies a second birth¹),

¹ See the excellent annotation of Whitby. But the passage demands a closer analysis, and a more determinate solution. The question turns on the use here made of the ambiguous word, *ἄνωθεν*. Hic tamen ambigitur utrum *ἄνωθεν* vertendum sit superne, (ut sine dubio v. 31,) an rursus. Posterior significatus paucissimis neque omnino certis exemplis: Gal. iv. 9. Sap. xix. 6. nititur. Vater in loc. “*Ἀνωθεν* retains, I think, its own signification, though *πάλιν* may also be implied. It is equivalent to *anew*, in the sense of “again—from the beginning.” In the parallel passages both words are expressed. *Οἷς πάλιν ἄνωθεν δουλεύειν θέλετε*. Gal. iv. 9. Not merely *again*, but *over again*. “*Ὅλη γὰρ ἡ κτίσις ἐν ἰδίῳ γενεῇ πάλιν ἄνωθεν διετυποῦτο*—κ.τ.λ. Sap. xix. 6. “For the whole creature in his proper kind was fashioned again *anew*.” Chrysostom explains *ἄνωθεν* by *ἐξ ἀρχῆς*. “*Ἐκεῖνο μάλιστα καὶ τιμᾶν καὶ φιλεῖν ἡμᾶς νομίζονται, ὅσοι περ ἄνωθεν ὥσιν ἡμᾶς παρεσκευασμένοι εὖ ποιεῖν· ὅπερ καὶ πατέρες ἐπὶ παίδων ποιοῦσι· καὶ γὰρ εἰ ὕστερον διδόασιν τὰ γράμματα, ἀλλ’ ἄνωθεν καὶ ἐξ ἀρχῆς εἰσι τοῦτο προηρημένοι*. Hom. vii. in 1 Cor. p. 281, Ed.

Saville.—*Originally and from the beginning: all along.*

This gives a sense to our Saviour’s words more literal, more comprehensive, and I venture to think, more agreeable to the context, than either, or than both of the common interpretations. “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, unless a man *be born from the beginning*, he cannot see the kingdom of God. With this the answer of Nicodemus exactly tallies. “How can a man be born,” (not *again*,) “being old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb,” (the beginning, according to his carnal apprehension,) “and be born?” The emphasis is on *γεννηθῆναι* taken absolutely. That this birth must be an iteration of the first is a mere inference, not taken up in our Lord’s rejoinder, who contents Himself with asserting, that it must be divine and spiritual. Again, “Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born *from the beginning*. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou knowest not *whence* (from what source) it cometh, or whither it goeth (what its destination); so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” This view takes the mystery of regeneration out of the world of time and sense, while it

he accounts a strange and inexplicable enigma. "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" How is this radical change to be effected? Is it possible to supplant the inveterate feelings of age, or erase the long imprinted character of guilt, that their place may be supplied by infant docility, and unspotted innocence? Or we may understand the words literally, as a statement of the difficulties apparently involved in our Saviour's proposition with a view to further elucidation. Our Lord in reiterating his assurance, and, as it would seem, in reply to this objection, introduces an additional circumstance. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born of *water* and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

Here the necessity of regeneration, (whatever this may be,) as a pre-requisite for admission into the "kingdom of God," (whatever *this* may mean,) is distinctly and emphatically asserted. What then are we to understand by these terms? And first, what is meant by being born again of water and of spirit?

Three opinions are possible. That which is here spoken of may be an emblematic rite, outward and ceremonial, the form of baptism. Or it may require a vital change, inward and spiritual, an actual regeneration. Or both meanings may be implied.

In favour of the first opinion it may be urged, that

marks its divine nature, and refers it to its heavenly origin. We have thus a new birth essentially mystical, symbolized and involved in baptism. The carnal inquiry of Nicodemus respecting the *time* and *manner*, (the *modus operandi*), is silently put down by the Son of

God as inapplicable, while He directs our attention with solemn earnestness to the *nature*, and by implication, the divine author of the gift. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

“to be born again,” was a phrase familiar both to Jews and Heathens, and meant nothing more than washing, or baptism, employed as an initiative rite, by the former at the admission of Gentile proselytes, by the latter at the celebration of certain religious mysteries¹. In this case the declaration of our Saviour amounts to this—“Ye Jews have been accustomed to baptize Gentiles, and to call this a new birth, indicating metaphorically the necessity of repentance, and a change of mind. But I say unto you, that *every* man must be so baptized, Jews as well as Gentiles, in order to enter the kingdom of Messiah.”

This interpretation is indeed sufficiently intelligible, and removes all mystery from the doctrine. According to this scheme, the solemn words of the English Liturgy, in the office of baptism, “Seeing now, that this child is regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ’s Church,” will mean no more, than that the child is baptized and introduced into the visible congregation of believers: and when we thank God for these great benefits, we only allude to the external privileges of the faithful, deprived of all mystical efficacy: and when we pray God that this child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning, we can only mean that he may never be excluded from the society to which he has now been admitted; or more loosely, that he may realize the advantages derivable from his outward position.

Nevertheless, insuperable difficulties lie in the way of this explanation. In the first place, it is purely hypothe-

¹ See WALL’s *History of Infant Baptism*, Introduction, S. vi. (Vol. I., page 32. New edition by Rev. Henry Cotton.) Chap. iv. sect. 11. (Vol. I., page 101.) Some doubt is thrown on this by Vater. “An jam tum, ut postea (cf. Lightfoot et Schöttgen ad h. l.) a Judæis proselyti regeniti vocabantur, et hæc metaphora Nicodemæ nota esse deberet non liquet.”

tical and arbitrary. There is nothing in our Saviour's language to indicate a particular allusion to the Jews. His word is "a man," or, more literally, "one," that is, "every one," simply, without any distinctive emphasis. Contrast with this the emphatic language of St. Paul, where this distinction is intended. "Are *we* better than *they*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are *all* under sin¹."

Secondly, there would have been nothing in this doctrine to startle Nicodemus, nothing, surely, to justify the solemn and emphatic tone in which it was delivered. It might have been expressed in the plainest language, and in this case would have excited no surprise. The Jews expected to enter the kingdom of God by baptism. They had already flocked to the baptism of John, many both of the Pharisees and Sadducees being among the number, and wondered why he baptized, if he were not *Elias, neither that Prophet*. It was the necessity and mysterious nature of the inward change, not of the outward rite, which rebuked the self-sufficient descendant of Abraham, and called forth our Saviour's reiterated "Verily, verily."

Thirdly, the letter of our Saviour's expressions is not satisfied by this explanation. He does not speak of a birth by water *merely*, or regeneration as synonymous with ritual baptism, but a birth by water and spirit²;

¹ Rom. iii. 9.

² 'Εξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος, by water and spirit, or spiritual operation, doubtless the influence of the Spirit, but this is implied, not expressed. The common rendering is alike untenable, on critical and theological ground. The existence of the Holy Ghost, as a

distinct hypostasis, and not as a mere quality of the Godhead, is involved in every possible revelation of the truth. In that which we have actually received, from the sublime record of the creation, with which it opens, to the period of which we are now treating, it is all along *implied*, and at length

spiritual regeneration, whether coincident with baptism, or simply denoted by it; a spiritual, as contrasted with a natural birth, both being equally real, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit."

Lastly, this change is expressly declared to be obscure and mysterious; for it is compared to the course of the wind, a proverbial expression, implying that the mode of operation was indiscernible and inexplicable¹. A complete moral change could not, our Saviour argues, be produced but by spiritual causes; for "that which is born of the flesh, is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit." But the human spirit, the breath of conscious life, the moral and intellectual principle in man, like its material emblem, "the wind that bloweth where it *will*," being intangible and invisible, cannot be the subject of outward observation. This evident truth, Nicodemus, as a master in Israel, ought to have known; and not, in reply to our Saviour's distinct declaration, so forcibly repeated, and so clearly illustrated, have asked again, "How can these things be?" It was a mystery, indeed, but such as might *reasonably* have been expected, and in which it was his duty to acquiesce.

On the other hand, the regeneration here spoken of may be exclusively inward and spiritual, the allusion to water being merely metaphorical, as little indicating an

plainly *supposed* as a matter already known and acknowledged^a. This is evident, likewise, from the accounts delivered of our Saviour's baptism. But to announce the *coming* of the Paraclete, and to indicate His offices, was reserved to

^a Matt. x. 20. Luke xii. 12. Mark xiii. 11.

a later and very different occasion. The same reasoning applies to the sixth and tenth verses, in which the spirit is simply opposed to the flesh, and ought not, I think, to be printed as a proper name.

¹ See the reference to Wolf, Welstein, &c., in BLOOMFIELD'S *Greek Testament*.

outward baptism with water, as the similar use of the word "fire" by the baptist, indicated an outward baptism with fire. This explanation again frees the passage from all mystery of a strictly religious nature. A divine truth is announced, but nothing, in this view of the matter, is here added to make it the object of practical acceptance, or, properly speaking, of faith, which involves a consent of the will, as well as the assent of the understanding¹.

The difficulty of forcing the office of baptism, as celebrated in the English Church, into any accordance with this view, (which, however, is very popular with religious persons, and is entitled evangelical,) is severely felt, and has occasioned the secession of many of her members, and some of her clergy. Thus, when we state that the new-baptized infant is regenerate, we can only be understood to express a hope that this *may* be the case, either now, in answer to the prayers of his parents or sponsors, or hereafter, at some uncertain period, in consequence of his own repentance, and in virtue of his own faith; the laver of regeneration being only so far connected with the transaction, as it affords an expressive image of the hoped-for benefit; a construction which is justly felt to be evasive.

¹ To supply this defect, the validity of prayer, as an outward mean of grace, is commonly taken into the account. Regeneration sent from heaven at unawares, without any corresponding act on the part of the receiver, can no more form a part of religion, and is as little a subject of faith as the renewal of the teeth of infancy. This, also, is a gift of God, and the occasion of grateful acknow-

ledgment. True, regeneration is known only as revealed; but this of itself makes no difference. Why should that be revealed with which we can have nothing to do? The use of baptism is to symbolize, and effectuate the part assigned to man, in respect of this divine grace. This does not deny the validity of prayer, of which, indeed, it is a specific form. Art. xxvii.

With regard, however, to Scripture, whether the above explanation comes up to the *spirit* of our Saviour's words, will be affirmed or denied, according as the principles laid down in the two preceding sermons are rejected, or admitted ; but, in truth, it falls far short of the *letter*. For, after all, the allusion to "water" must mean *something* ; more must be intended by water and spirit, than by spirit alone. *Spiritual* water is still, in some sense, *water*. Spirit *represented* by water supposes water as a token. But what *does* it mean ? We know that by "the Holy Ghost and fire," the baptist intended that divine influence, formerly typified by fire, and subsequently given under the same symbol. The sacred Shechinalh which had formerly served as an emblem of the present Deity, appeared once again as a mean, or necessary adjunct of His lively and revealed operation. This analogy, therefore, will lead us to the conclusion, that by water and spirit is meant that water, which in old time had been in various ways an emblem of inward purification, and particularly in the rite of baptism, but which henceforth would become a mean, or necessary adjunct, of the same spiritual cleansing, actually and divinely inwrought.

And this anticipation is confirmed by the fact. The emblematic rite of baptism *was* continued under the new dispensation, when the day of *mere* types had for ever passed away. To what end ? Not merely to intimate by an expressive action, that which had now been clearly announced in words. Enable the dumb man to speak, and he ceases to talk by signs. A typical worship, however intelligible, is mute as compared with the revelation of the Word ! To what end then if not to embody in a sensible form, to accredit by an authentic token, in

a word, to give outwardness to a spiritual act, and thus connect it with a positive religion?

And this will appear still more plainly, when we have determined what is meant by seeing, or entering the kingdom of God. That Nicodemus understood by the phrase, a state as outward as the Hebrew commonwealth, and far more conspicuous, is unquestionable. It is equally clear that our Saviour did not think fit to contradict this impression, or even to modify it, except by implication. The doctrine which he *did* deliver, involves the true correction. If the regeneration, of which he spake, be outward and visible, it forms a fit entrance to an outward dispensation. If inward and spiritual, it may properly throw open the gates of a spiritual sanctuary. If it be both in one, it unites both uses. It admits us to the visible temple, and to its unseen shrine. But this is the converse of our present argument, and an anticipation of its result. We are assured from independent sources, that the kingdom of Messiah, though spiritual, is outwardly demonstrated. Of this we have had accumulated proofs. But, to keep within our present subject, if the Lord's people were not to be visibly distinguished, for what was visible baptism instituted? The kingdom of God, therefore, is a spiritual, but yet an outward dispensation, and the new birth by which it is entered, is inward, indeed, of the heart, in the spirit, but by *water* visibly betokened.

The new birth of a Christian then, is neither *merely* outward, nor *exclusively* spiritual. But while it is conceded that there is both an outward and inward regeneration, it may be urged that the two are not necessarily *coincident*. That external baptism is an introduction to the visible Church; and this again in the ordinary scheme

of Providence, is intended to train and educate the members of the invisible Church, for which inward regeneration is essential. So by the blessing of God this heavenly grace may indirectly, and by a circuitous process, follow upon baptism, but that the two are not divinely or mysteriously connected.

There is some partial and practical truth in this statement; but it is extremely untenable in theory. It leads to a double interpretation, as well of our Saviour's words, in the passage under discussion, as of the Baptismal Service, in which they are quoted, and of which they are the foundation; as if they were applicable both to an outward and an inward dispensation, but not to *both in one*; as if by the phrase, kingdom of God, our Saviour meant two different and separate things, and the birth by water and spirit, were baptism *or* regeneration, according as the one or the other signification be assigned. But this is to palter with the use of language. Whatever the kingdom of God may signify, it is entered *both* by water and spirit; for saving grace is scripturally annexed to both, not only by implication, as in this passage, but in many express formularies. "He that believeth *and* is baptized, shall be saved¹." "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, *and* ye shall receive the Holy Ghost²." "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body³," not otherwise incorporated, but baptized. "Eight souls were saved (in the Ark) by water; the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God⁴):" that is to say, baptism is *not* mere washing, but moral purification; yet does it not

¹ Mark xvi. 16.² Acts ii. 38.³ 1 Cor. xii. 13.⁴ 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.

therefore cease to be baptism, salvation by water "*in a figure.*"

But if the regeneration, spoken of by our Lord, be neither an outward sign unattended by an inward grace, nor an inward grace unconnected with an outward sign, if it can be understood of neither exclusively, nor of both severally, it must imply a mysterious union of the two in one holy sacrament, a new birth of the Spirit symbolized, and, by divine appointment, represented by baptismal washing.

I come then to these conclusions, first, that our Lord's immediate purpose in this divine discourse, was to enforce the necessity of an inward and supernatural change, properly described as a new and heavenly, or spiritual birth. Secondly, that when interrogated as to the mode in which this was to be effected, He gave Nicodemus to understand, that it was (as might be expected) obscure and mysterious. Thirdly, that in the allusion to water, He intimated its future connexion with baptism, as an appointed symbol, I say, intimated; for the use of emblematic washing being already familiar to His hearer, this figure was employed, in the first instance, for the sake of its known signification; while its sacramental use (subsequently ascertained by the fact) is certainly and directly implied. And this will appear still more strongly, when we find precisely the same mode adopted by our Saviour, with respect to the other sacrament, as recorded by the same evangelist. When He calls Himself the Bread of Life, it is the divine and incomprehensible mystery, the necessity of feeding spiritually "upon the true Bread that came down from heaven," which is *directly* announced, yet with no covert allusion to that sacramental bread, which He Himself consecrated to be the symbol and sacrament of His body.



SERMON XV.

ON THE SACRAMENTS.

PART III.—INFANT BAPTISM.

MARK X. 14.

Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.

THE Church Catechism, after stating what is required of persons to be baptized,—“Repentance, whereby they forsake sin, and faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that sacrament,”—properly inquires,—“Why then are infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them?” The answer returned, “Because they promise them both by their sureties, which promise when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform,” is perhaps, from its brevity, the least satisfactory part of this most admirable and comprehensive formulary. For though it may be conceded that an infant is bound by a promise made in its behalf by its natural guardians for an unquestionable benefit; yet if faith and repentance procure grace in baptism, instrumentally, either in whole or in part; or, if these conditions are required by divine appointment, absolutely, and *for their own sakes*; the regeneration of an infant, must, after all, be future and contingent; which is contrary to the orthodox faith. “Seeing, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate,” are the Church’s own words. And, again, if by “sureties,” those who appear as sponsors in public baptism,

be exclusively intended, and if the promise made by these on behalf of the child, be an essential part of the rite, then the sacrament must be supposed to labour under some defect, where from any cause these sureties are not present, which is equally opposed to the faith of the Church. For there are no sponsors in private baptism. Yet we are enjoined not to doubt, but that the child so baptized, as the Church directs, is lawfully and sufficiently baptized; that is to say, “is now by the laver of regeneration in baptism, received into the number of the children of God, and heirs of everlasting life¹.”

If, however, it has been shown, that on the above-named conditions depend not the validity of the sacrament, but its *eventual* efficacy, and if the appearance of sponsors at the font be a point of order, not affecting the sacrament itself, though conducive to the use of edifying, these objections fall to the ground, and the answer of the Church in her Catechism will appear, not more brief, than satisfactory.

Thus the subject seems to arrange itself under two heads, which I shall consider separately; speaking first of the propriety of infant baptism, considered as a sacrament,—secondly, of its orderly administration, and the supplementary rite of confirmation. This will lead me to speak of the office of sponsors. A few words on the history of baptism will properly close this discourse and complete the general subject. And first, of the sacrament as administered to infants.

To set this matter in its true light, it will be necessary to recur to the principles already laid down. We have seen that baptism is the sign and instrument of regeneration, a divine gift, purely gratuitous, and the very first

¹ Office of Private Baptism.

beginning of spiritual life. A man must be born again before he can *see* the kingdom of God. Hence baptism is properly used to mark the entrance of Christianity. In the case of an adult convert, while he remains unbaptized, he is not *formally* a Christian at all: he has not entered the sacred precinct, though he has placed himself at the gate. He has turned his back upon old things, the world, the flesh, and the devil, but he cannot *yet* say,—he has no authority to say with confidence, “old things are passed away; behold all things are become *new*’.” For regeneration, the inward grace pre-supposed in this change, is not itself cognizable by the senses; so that to refer this mysterious operation to such a time, or circumstance, from any inward emotion, or outward sign, except that which God Himself has appointed, is fanatical delusion: therefore, the line of demarcation between the old and the new is fixed, according to a divine promise, by baptism, given, and to be taken, as “a means whereby we may receive” the required grace, “and a pledge to assure us thereof’.”

The use of baptism then, is to *mark* the turning point between nature and grace, between the flesh and the spirit, between darkness and light, between the world

¹ 2 Cor. v. 17.

² ‘*Ἡμεῖς . . . λαβόντες ἐντολὴν παρ’ αὐτοῦ κηρύξαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον εἰς ὅλον τὸν κόσμον, καὶ μαθητεῦσαι πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ βαπτίσαι εἰς τὸν αὐτοῦ θάνατον, ἐπὶ αὐθεντία τοῦ Θεοῦ τῶν ὅλων, ὃς ἐστὶ αὐτοῦ πατήρ, καὶ μαρτυρία πνεύματος, ὃς ἐστὶ παράκλητος· διδάσκομεν ὑμᾶς ταῦτα πάντα.* *Const. Apost. lib. v. cap. 7.*

May not many of the ancient pieces, which are accounted spurious, have been written in the

character of the persons whose names they bear, without intentional fraud on the part of their real authors; as Cicero puts what he has to say on old age into the mouth of Cato major “*quo majorem auctoritatem haberet oratio?*” The *σύνταγμα*, quoted above, though of uncertain date, and apparently interpolated, is a curious repertory of ancient, perhaps primitive, opinions and usages. The apostolical doctrine of baptism is well stated in several places.

which is then and thereby left, and the Church which is then and thereby entered. “For by one Spirit are we all *baptized* into one body¹.” Therefore to remain unbaptized is to continue in sin. For in the language of our Church, (herein pronouncing a self-evident truth,) “works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of His spirit, are not pleasant to God².” And baptism for this use is *necessary*: for hereby God does that for man which he cannot do for himself. He makes known to themselves and others, those whom He has made to become His own children. He sets upon them His own mark, and gathers them together into one fold, under one shepherd. Where indeed this sacrament is by God’s providence withheld from one duly prepared, and heartily desirous to receive it, the Church charitably accepts, and in some cases distinctly recognises such other signs of regeneration as He is pleased to vouchsafe. An earnestly expressed wish, prevented by death; and again, martyrdom, or the baptism of blood, are specified cases³, which may be cited in illustration of a general principle: but these exceptions, by the uncertainty of their nature, or the rarity of their occurrence, only prove “the great necessity of this sacrament where it may be had⁴.”

Now apply this to the case of an infant, born, we may suppose, of believing parents, reared “in the nurture and

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 13.

² Article xiii.

³ Sufficit Spiritus et aqua: sufficit spiritus, et sanguis; si aquam non exclusit contemptus religionis, sed articulus necessitatis: sufficiet spiritus solus quia testimonium ipsius pondus habet. Petrus Ble-sensis, Serm. xxii. de S. Trinitate.

‘Ο δὲ ἀξιωθεὶς μαρτυρίου . . .
καὶν κατηχούμενος ἦ, ἄλυπος

ἀπρίτω· τὸ γὰρ πάθος τὸ ὑπὲρ
Χριστοῦ, ἔσται αὐτῷ γνησιώ-
τερον βάπτισμα· ὅτι αὐτὸς μὲν
πέτρα συναποθνήσκει τῷ κυρίῳ,
οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ, τύπῳ. *Const. Apost.*
lib. v. cap. 6.

See also HOOKER’S *Eccl. Pol.*
Book v., c. ix., 6, with the note.
Vol. II. p. 346, 7.—Keble’s Ed.

⁴ Office of Adult Baptism.

admonition of the Lord," cherished day by day by the Church, as by a tender mother watching over, training, and protecting a beloved child; or to state the case more generally: born in a Christian land, surrounded by Christian people, instructed (more or less directly and efficiently), in Christian doctrine, invited to partake of Christian ordinances, to hear the word of God, and join in common prayers. When is such an one to be baptized? Is he all this while *without* the Church, or *within* it? Is he in a state of nature or of grace? Can his parents, trembling with anxiety for his spiritual welfare,—can his friends and neighbours, the holy brotherhood and society in which he is cast,—can the watchful, loving Church, with which he is on every side surrounded, do nothing for him till he come of riper years? Reason, conscience, Scripture, the voice of God intelligibly heard in each, and echoed from heart to heart, reject the supposition.

But if from the first he *may* be in a state of acceptance, *may* be a child of God, *may* be capable of Church fellowship, *may* be one of Christ's little ones; if there is nothing in his outward position to prevent, and every thing to promote this blessed hope; if there be nothing in Christ's word to check, or chill, but every thing to encourage this precious assurance; if the Saviour Himself has said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven¹;" if He has declared that conversion (which is but another name for repentance and faith), is being like a little child, an approach at best, (so far as mere reciprocity is concerned; and what else has man to do with regeneration?) an approach at best to the unblemished innocence and docile heart of infancy, (prevented by sovereign grace,

¹ Mark x. 14.

before the commission of actual sin,)—if this be true, why defer baptism, one day beyond the earliest occasion, after birth, when it can be solemnized with becoming celebration in the visible Church?

Why defer it? In the happiest event will repentance and faith ever remove the impediments to baptism, (the guilt of actual sin, and the evil heart of unbelief—the inveteracy of habit, and the obduracy of a perverted will,) so as to make the infant more fit for the seal of regeneration, than when he first brings his temptible nature into this tempting world? Or if we speak of *original* sin, the fontal source of corruption, from which are the issues of death, is there *any* condition under which this can be removed, independently of the grace of God, and the energy of His Holy Spirit? And what is there in the state of infancy unfavourable for the reception of “these great benefits?” Is there *no* spirit couched beneath the infant form? If there be, is it debarred from *free* mercy? Does it afford no residence for that Spirit, in whom is the power of truth, and the source of light? Is it incapable of *commencing* union with Christ? If not, is there any fitter time to initiate the life of God in the soul, than at the beginning of the life of reason?

But actual repentance, conscious faith, these belong to maturer years. Let baptism be postponed till these have become apparent. I ask in reply, to what period of life does this conduct us? Shall we fix the epoch of baptism at the time when these graces *begin* to manifest themselves? When, after the first dawn of infancy, shall it be said, “Now, and not till now, the child or youth exhibits the required fitness. Hitherto *no* traces of repentance or faith have been discernible: now they begin to appear?” Or shall we wait till these graces have their perfect work?

Is the end more easy to determine than the beginning? Who shall say of himself, much less of another, "Now at length my repentance is ascertained, my faith sufficiently matured?" Who would not tremble in the one case lest he should be too late, in the other lest he should be too early?

Or if these objections are set aside as unimportant, and the time when baptism is received is pronounced a matter of indifference, with this only proviso, that the recipient be an intelligent party to the proceeding, and have exhibited what are considered satisfactory signs of a serious character, why, in this case, baptize *at all*? That which may be postponed indefinitely, may, with equal safety, be neglected altogether. If, indeed, baptism were deemed individually *requisite*, the ever-impending stroke of death would chide even the least delay. If not, why should that have any terrors for the man, which is not feared, under the same circumstances, for the youth, the boy, the child?

But if, though not essential, the administration of baptism be held desirable as tending to edification, and be, therefore, required by the Church from her adult members, as a point of decency and order, to which it is generally proper, and thus far a personal duty, to conform, but which, if a convenient season should not occur, may without danger be altogether omitted; still, to be even edifying, the rite must be significant. What then is the case of an adult person, born in the Church, and distinguished perhaps from childhood by an earnest and pious demeanour, what, in this case, does baptism signify? "A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness;" (as it is written, "We are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory

of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life'.¹” But this, it is supposed, has taken place long ago. To what end is it *now* betokened? To authenticate it, and make it known. But it has already been virtually recognised, perhaps, for years. Is the signature of the sovereign required to a document, on which we have already acted? Shall we first ascertain its authenticity, and then procure it to be verified? Is not this to make the seal of our charter a superfluous addition?

In a word, if this rite be not a sacrament, if it convey no grace, and add no assurance, it is a mere form; and to make it requisite for the full enjoyment of Church privileges, is to reduce these also to mere forms, the very meaning of which is lost, or greatly obscured, by the altered circumstances under which they are administered.

Far different is the case of an adult convert from heathenism, with whom baptism is, as it was originally intended, a real initiation into the visible Church; and very different is the case of an adult person, who, though brought up in the profession of Christianity, yet, without baptism, repairs at a later period of life the deficiency under which he has so long laboured. For this full provision is made in the English Liturgy, while, at the same time, it is declared that “the baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ².”

Hitherto I have spoken exclusively of the propriety of infant baptism, considered as a sacrament. I have shown that there is nothing in the thing signified—the inward mystery—incompatible with the tenderest age; on the contrary, that it is most reasonable, most desirable,

¹ Rom. vi. 4.

² Art. xxvii.

most according with the voice of Scripture, and the hopes of the Christian Church, that the natural and spiritual life should begin together, and be developed equally. Hence, I have inferred that there can be nothing improper in the early administration of the rite, but, on the contrary, that the most grievous inconveniences and inconsistencies arise from its postponement.

But *how* is the rite to be performed? Under what circumstances is the sacrament to be bestowed? Is it simply necessary that the infant should be brought to the font, and there receive the seal of its regeneration? Does the Church throw open her doors without restriction? Does she ask no assurance, and make no provision that her privileges are not hereby profaned? Far from it. We have seen that the eventual efficacy, or more properly, effectuation of baptism, requires at every given time the co-operation of the recipient. For the adult, therefore, the immediate benefit of the rite depends upon its right reception: but for the infant, the assurance which it affords is unconditionally certain. It is a pledge both of mercy and favour, which nothing can occur in the recipient to vitiate¹. This distinction is not lost sight of

¹ Let us not rashly conclude that either of these is inapplicable to the case of an infant, lest while we deny his need of the one, we make him incapable of the other. If we negative potential sin, as a non-existent, must we not negative potential righteousness? If by mere anticipation the first is so prevented that it *cannot* bring forth fruit unto death, can we conclude that the other, similarly transplanted, will ripen into blessedness? If death, in the first behoof, be a timely happiness,

must it not, in respect of the latter hope, be an *untimely* blight? Thus, we either reduce the newborn infant to a nullity, forgetting Who has spoken of the mother's "joy," "*as soon as* she is delivered of the child," "that a MAN is born into the world^a;" or we make sin to *originate* from the world without, no longer the mystery of a rebel nature, but the misfortune of being tempted.

Nay, if the angel of death does but transfer the unopened bud to

^a John xvi. 21.

by the English Church. In the case of an adult it is said, "Doubt ye not¹ that the Lord our God will favourably receive these present persons, *truly* repenting, and coming to Him by faith:" but in the case of an infant, it is unconditionally declared, "Doubt ye not that He will favourably receive this present infant;" and again, "It is certain by God's Word, that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved²." In the one case then it is not only necessary that the profession of the baptized person should be sincere and, as far as possible, intelligent, but also that his spiritual instruction should be carried on in the fear of God, and in the faith of His holy Church. And for this formal provision is made, both by a regularly conducted examination before the rite takes place, and by the appointment of godfathers and godmothers, who are "to put them in mind what a solemn vow, promise, and profession they have made; and, also, call upon them to use all diligence to be rightly instructed in God's holy Word³." In the

heavenly bowers, to "blossom there" and "show its beauty to the sun;" if, with this faith, we dispel the terrors of that first, typical, dread, admonitory doom, from which we *know* that infancy is not exempt, making heaven populous with hopes deferred and affections lost to earth, but too divine to die; must we not be *assured* that there is no canker at the core? But does this depend upon a mere rite? Not the fact: God forbid! This is the free mercy of God, revealed in his Son Jesus Christ, who hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. But the *assurance*, whence comes this, if not from that *given* symbol, that points first to the

burial of sin, and then to the resurrection of the just^a?"

Oh! let Infant Baptism be God's angel to cheer us with this gracious message, "Fear not the death of infancy, as if it brought with it a further doom, negative or positive: for the child is redeemed with the man; his ransom is paid; he is regenerate with Christ; his state is secure. He is not merely rescued from hell, which it were impiety to fear, but *saved* for bliss, which faith alone is privileged to hope."

¹ Office of Adult Baptism.

² Office of Infant Baptism.

³ Office of Adult Baptism.

^a Col. ii. 12.

other case, while the care of the present is committed to the infinite loving mercy of God, revealed in His Son Jesus Christ, the infant is, nevertheless, formally pledged to the conditions, before it receives the seal of the covenant, so, with regard to the future, provision is made as far as human assurance can extend, that these shall be duly learned and truly performed. In a word, the present is looked upon as the germ of the future, and the man baptized in the child.

This leads me to the second head on which I proposed to speak. The orderly administration of baptism, more especially of infant baptism, as connected with the office of sponsors.

And, first, it will readily be admitted that an infant, *as an infant*, can have nothing to do with penitence, or conscious faith. It is holy for its parents' sake¹. In other words, the propriety of introducing it by baptism into the visible Church, is the result of its outward position. It is one thing to offer no impediment to the sacrament of regeneration, and another thing to be called to receive it according to the will of Christ. An infant is negatively meet for baptism because it is undefiled by actual sin, and positively meet in regard of its future capabilities; but its ceremonial cleanness, if the expression be allowable, is derived, as we learn from St. Paul, from its parents, from both, or either: so large is the liberty encouraged by the apostle on this point. Hence, in a case of urgency, when baptism is required rather as a provision against death, than with any reference to future life; or if this should be deemed superfluous, yet as a mark of devotion, that another lamb may be added, ere it be too late, to the visible flock: in this case, the Church

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 14.

waits neither for vow nor promise, but accedes at once to the earnest desire of the parent, so evidently sanctioned in Scripture; and seeing a young child brought, as it were, to be touched by Jesus,—touched and blessed in His own good way,—places the nurseling solemnly and ostensibly in the Saviour's arms, not as if His mercy must otherwise be precluded, God forbid, but because a seal of assurance is hereby afforded which it would be presumptuous to neglect'. And although the rite of baptism demands, by its very definition, a *solemn celebration* which it is not more superstitious to observe with over scrupulosity, than to anticipate with over fearfulness, so that the Church of England has taken the most rational view in requiring, under all circumstances, even the most urgent, a lawful minister and competent witnesses, yet with "the judicious Hooker," who might with equal justice be distinguished as the charitable Hooker, I should not, under all circumstances, condemn a larger concession to the pious solicitude of a Christian parent¹. I mean, that in another state of public feeling, a fuller dispensation in case of necessity, may have consisted with a wise discretion: for, as matters now stand, such an extraordinary license is more likely to be assumed from a contempt of the one ordinance, than from an over appreciation of the other; the person ministering more liable to be set at nought, than the thing ministered, too anxiously and too timidly coveted.

¹ See the last note.

² This was done at the conference at Hampton Court, when the rubric was altered accordingly. Properly understood, the change was as justifiable on grounds of reason, as of ecclesiastical prece-

dent. Lay baptism, I humbly conceive, was never defensible, except as a concession to superstitious fears. See NICHOLLS's *Prayer Book*. See also HOOKER, *Eccles. Pol.* b. v., c. 61, with the notes in KEBLE's Ed.

But though a lawful, that is, an ordained minister, and the presence of suitable witnesses, is required, that the regularity and publicity of an initiatory rite may thus far be secured, and a connexion with the visible Church established, yet here there is no question of conditions on the part of the infant, and consequently no necessity for "sureties." The rite referring solely to the original defilement, say rather to the certain expectation and potential stain of sin, the infant spirit, laved in that lustral water, and invested in a new robe of heavenly whiteness, is thus, as it were, prepared to take its place among the purer, and be blessed with the vision of God¹."

But if it survive, a further provision is required, not, indeed, to perfect the sacrament, but to complete its orderly administration. The infant, virtually pledged to the conditions of the covenant by the mere fact of its baptism, must subsequently make a solemn and formal profession to this effect; and this, under ordinary circumstances, is demanded in the first instance. And although this profession must be made by others in the infant's name, without its actual consent, yet is the engagement not merely formally, but really binding; not so much because the benefit is unquestionable, which is the explanation commonly given², as because the conditions required are involved in the very nature of religious obligation, and would be binding whether they were

¹ *Then the godfathers and godmothers shall take and lay their hands upon the children, and the minister shall put upon him his white vesture, commonly called the Chrisom, and say:—Take this white vesture, for a token of the innocence which, by God's grace, in this holy sacrament of baptism, is*

given unto thee; and for a sign whereby thou art admonished, so long as thou livest, to give thyself to innocence of living; that after this transitory life, thou mayest be partaker of everlasting life. Amen. B. i. Edward vi.

² See NICHOLLS's *Common Prayer*. On the Catechism.

formally agreed to or not. Under any circumstances the future man must renounce sin, believe in God as revealed, and serve Him as commanded. Hence, this formal engagement, though in the highest degree solemn and edifying, is not essential to baptism, but, as above declared, a point of order and discipline.

. And this brings me to consider more particularly the office of sponsors, who, it must be remembered, are as positively required in the baptism of adults, as in that of infants, and substantially for the same purpose. They are required by the Church as “sureties” on behalf of the candidate for baptism, lest in bestowing that holy rite, she should be casting her pearls before swine. A serious responsibility, indeed, exaggerated it may be by some scrupulous persons, underrated by many more, and properly understood by very few. They appear at the baptismal font as *witnesses*, and pledge themselves, so far as human knowledge and ability extend, (for no man can bind himself to an impossibility,) that the holy objects of the rite as performed in their presence shall hereafter be carried out. Thus, the primary intention of sponsors, (whether as deduced from the idea and definition of the office, or inferred from its history,) is to give publicity to baptism. And, herein, they testify to the public nature of the transaction itself: as if it were said, the benefits which are sealed in baptism, though affecting “the spirit of man that is within him¹,” in the very issues of life, are neither given in silence, nor are they to remain secret. Christ’s hidden ones are not only to be *made* (an operation purely divine and invisible,) but *marked* according to the will and demonstration of God. And although His ultimate decree is still secret, so that we cannot tell who are

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 11.

written in the book of His remembrance, that is, in heaven, or who will be His when He shall finally make up His jewels, yet it is the character of His earthly dispensation, to symbolize that great consummation, as its prelude and approximating image.

But they are not only witnesses to the fact of baptism; they testify both to the due administration of the rite, and to its right reception; and this, no less in the instance of adults, than in that of infants. And although a more onerous duty may frequently be incurred in the latter case, yet the responsibility is fully as great, perhaps greater, in the former. For here it extends, at least indirectly, to the sincerity of the candidate, so far as this can be inferred from outward indications, whereas the actual state of an infant is in no degree an occasion of solicitude. And as the Church insists that the relation of parent and sponsor shall not be united in the same person¹, (for this plain reason, that if the former be a Christian, no positive vow can increase the obligation under which he already lies, to bring up his child in his own faith; if not,—if any suspicion on this head exists,—the sponsor is required by his very office to secure the Church against the profanation which must ensue,) it is clear that the sponsorial office must, in ordinary cases, be regarded, as in this respect, supplemental to that of the parent: an additional safeguard against an evil which no precautions, alas! can entirely prevent. For it can never be intended to exclude a parent from the religious education of his own child.

While then the important duties attached to the office

¹ Placuit puculos hoc modo ad Baptismum admitti, ut oblati parvuli parentes naturales filium uni ex fidelibus tradant, &c. *Dionys. Arcop. Hier. Eccl.*—Suicer in voc. *Ἀνάδοχος*.

of sponsor, are recalled from the sad oblivion into which they have generally fallen, let not the responsibility incurred be strained so high in theory, as to reduce it in practice to nothing. Let not a service which none but good men are adequate to discharge, be so represented as to be necessarily declined by all but the careless, the unthinking, and the profane¹.

But besides these practical uses, there is in the offices of those who present the infant to the minister for baptism, a ceremonial propriety, essential to the beauty of holiness: and while we would not over estimate such considerations, let us not think it any gain in godliness that we are ignorant of their nature, and insensible to their influences. It is not exclusively as individuals that the sponsors assist at this high solemnity. They speak the language, and undertake the part of the entire Church, which is thus, as it were, present in the celebration of baptism, in the person of its representatives: a solemn demonstration of the interest entertained by the whole body for each one the feeblest of its members². It is thus that we are to understand the maxim of Justin Martyr, that the benefits of baptism are imparted to infants by the faith of those

¹ How early this reluctance, to incur the responsibilities of a sponsor, was entertained by serious persons, is evident from a passage in Pachymeres, de Hier. Eccl. quoted in Suicer, where speaking of the feelings of a Christian, when requested to undertake this office, he says, 'Ο δὲ πρῶτον μὲν ἀκούσας τὴν ἀναδοχὴν, καὶ ἀποβλέψας ἔνθεν μὲν τὸ τοῦ πράγματος ὕψος, ἐκείθεν δὲ τὸ εὐπερίτρεπτον τῶν ἀνθρώπων, φρίττει καὶ ἀμηχανεῖ.

But the worst effect of this some-

what exaggerated notion, is seen in Tertullian, who uses it as an argument against infant baptism. "Itaque pro cujusque personæ conditione, ac dispositione, etiam ætate, cunctatio baptismi utilior est: præsertim tamen circa parentes. Quid enim necesse est, si non tam necesse sponsores etiam periculo ingeri? qui et ipsi per mortalitatem destituere promissiones suas possunt, et proventu malæ indolis falli. Lib. de Baptismo, cap. xviii. p. 392.

² 1 Cor. xii. 26.

who present them¹, not as if the efficacy of the rite depended on the faith of the individual sponsors, (a cruel superstition, not unknown at the present day among those who would adjust the mysteries of the Church to their own notions of consistency.) It is the household of faith at large whose privilege it has ever been to make provision for its little ones. The holy Augustin is express on this point. "Infants," he says, "are brought to partake of spiritual grace, not so much by those in whose arms they are carried, as by the universal society of saints and believers²." This beautiful theory, by which the inequalities of external condition in the visible fold are smoothed away, and the hereditary visitation of sin mitigated, if not removed, (for if all care for each, then is no one wholly dependant upon any,) it is the business of sponsors, not merely to exhibit, for the comfort and edification of the flock, but, as far as may be, to reduce to practice.

It is in this character, and not, I repeat, merely as individuals, that they are enabled to undertake, without reserve, a contract which another is to perform. The transaction is in the first instance symbolical, yet it has a practical meaning, which is to be explained and limited by practical considerations. So by another path, we arrive at the same conclusion as before, that while the conscience of the sponsor need not be burdened by a charge, which in the nature of things it is impossible to sustain, it is not to be released from such obligations as fall within the line of practical use and expediency.

One point remains to be noticed connected with the

¹ Ἀξιοῦνται δὲ τῶν διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος ἀγαθῶν τὰ βρέφη τῇ πίστει τῶν προσφερόντων. | non tam ab iis quorum gestantur manibus, quam ab universâ societate sanctorum et fidelium. Aug. Ep. 23.

² Offeruntur quidem parvuli ad percipiendam spiritualem gratiam, |

sponsorial office in baptism. It is necessary to give uniformity to the rite, as administered under the different circumstances of infancy and mature age. It is in this way that the child is, as it were, placed on the same footing with the man. But though he is thus actually admitted into the family of Christ, a time must come when he shall “put away childish things,” and become indeed His soldier and servant¹. In this latter respect, the baptism of an infant is prospective, and thus far incomplete, that it carries with it a temporary provision, which must be laid aside when it ceases to be applicable, and exchanged for a personal and a permanent qualification. It requires a supplement, and for this purpose, the rite of confirmation, which we need not hesitate to entitle with the rubric, ancient and apostolical, has properly been retained in the Church.

That it is most ancient, if not strictly primitive, cannot be disputed. That it is of apostolical institution rests principally on the second verse of the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the rudiments of the Christian instruction are thus enumerated, “repentance from dead works, and faith toward God, the doctrine of baptism, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection from the dead, and of eternal judgment:” that is, as the passage is explained by a great Protestant Reformer, “profession of faith, emendation of life, a short account of the divine nature, and a compendary explication of doctrine which was delivered to the Catechumens in Baptism and Confirmation².” That imposition of hands after bap-

¹ HOOKER, *Eccles. Pol.* lxi.

² Apostolus quinque capita catechismi numerat, nempe professionem, emendationem vitæ, fidei summam de Deo, doctrinæ explicationem compendariam quæ in

baptismis, et impositione manuum tradi rudibus præsertim solebat. Quoted from Beza’s comment upon the sixth ch. of the Hebrews, in NICHOLLS’S *Common Prayer*.

tism was practised by the apostles for the purpose of conferring spiritual benediction, is indeed certain¹; and if the rite of confirmation, as it at present stands, has grown out of this practice in the apostolical Churches, in the most ancient times, not “corruptly,” but lawfully and fitly, with such adaptation as change of circumstances demanded, and the Church is fully competent to ordain, it may well be deemed to rest on apostolical authority, without forcing a general resemblance into an exact conformity, or taxing the evidence of Scripture in any respect further than it will bear. Still, it may be asked, what was the practice of the apostles on this point? Is infant baptism actually of apostolic institution, or is it merely an accommodation of the Church in after times?

A positive decision of this point, on *historical* grounds, is indeed hardly to be hoped for: else would it not now remain to be discussed. There exists, however—as many learned writers, whose statements we can now do little more than transcribe, have long ago proved—a high degree of probability, scarcely short of certainty, that the practice originated with the apostles themselves; that it is not merely embraced in the general direction given by our Lord Himself, but also alluded to in several Scriptural narratives; that it was common in the most primitive times, and at a very early period became universal. A few words on this head, the last on which I proposed to speak, will be sufficient.

The terms of the original command, it will be remembered, are the most general that can be conceived. “Baptize all nations.” No restriction of age, sex, or condition,—in fact, no qualification of any kind is here specified. Afterwards, by way of consequence, it is added,

¹ Acts viii. 17.

² See Art. xxv.

“He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.” Belief, therefore, in connexion with baptism, is indispensable; but the *manner* of this connexion is left wholly indeterminate. If from other considerations, we conclude that both faith and penitency are required, *previously* in adults, *subsequently* in infants, there is nothing in our Lord’s words to negative the supposition.

It is the same with the several narratives, alluded to above: nothing can be more general than the language employed. Peter, addressing a great and promiscuous multitude, bids them repent, and be baptized, *every one* of them; for the promise was to them, and *to their children*¹, meaning, of course, their posterity. Yet this marks Christianity, as in some sort, a national and hereditary boon, and thus points *inferentially* to infant baptism, as a necessary consequence. This assertion of St. Peter, and that of St. Paul, respecting the holiness of children born of Christian parents, explain each other, and suggest the same doctrine. It is not indeed said whether they, that gladly received the word, brought their families with them into the Church: but nothing is more likely; for we read that “Lydia and her household” were baptized; and, again, St. Paul baptized “the household of Stephanas.”

Now, if the baptism of infants be in itself an intolerable supposition, we may infer that they are tacitly excluded from these statements, as evidently out of the question. If, on the other hand, the presumption be entirely in its favour, so far from being contradicted by the history, it is strengthened by it almost to certainty.

Now that this presumption must have existed at the time, is demonstrable, from the two following considerations. First, that baptism being a rite already familiar to

¹ Acts ii. 39.

the Jews, and merely adapted to Christian purposes, must have carried with it its old associations, nothing being expressed to the contrary. But the baptism of young children was the customary practice. They were baptized with their parents, and the rest of their households, on their conversion to Judaism. Foundlings and captive children were initiated at the same age, and in the same manner. If it was now to be otherwise, so marked a change must have been specifically ordained.

But there was a still stronger reason for this precaution. Circumcision, the seal of the old covenant, had taken place on the eighth day after birth. If this was to be superseded by baptism, the type by its antitype; if Christians were the true children of promise, the Church, the true Israel; and if both Jews and Gentiles were to be *baptized* into one body, circumcision being thus rendered superfluous:—in exact proportion as these analogies became known, would the prejudice in favour of infant baptism increase, unless this point of resemblance were expressly disavowed and excepted. The silence, therefore, both of our Lord and His apostles, particularly St. Paul, who touches upon the subject perpetually, is conclusive that no such distinction existed, but that the analogy held throughout.

And on this analogy the early Church must have acted. Had it been otherwise, had the practice of the first Christians resembled that of the modern Baptists, as they are called¹, is it conceivable that no mention of

¹ They who call themselves emphatically Baptists, as if they alone baptized, cannot complain if they are called by others *Ana*-baptists, when, in fact, they re-baptize every convert which they make.

Antipædobaptists on principle, they become *Ana*-baptists in practice. The former term is inconvenient, not so much from its strangeness, as its length. Baptist and unitarian are equally misno-

baptism should occur in any of the apostolical epistles, except as of something past, a matter pre-supposed in the fact of their Christianity? that among all the practical directions with which these epistles abound, descending not unfrequently into minute details, (directions relating to marriage, to legal proceedings, to dress and behaviour, to points of conscience and expediency in the intercourse of Christians with Heathens,—above all, to the constitution and conduct of Christian assemblies, and the celebration of the great Christian passover,) no information should have been afforded as to the time or circumstances under which the children of Christian parents were to be “added to the Church?” that the preparation of a young person for baptism should never be so much as touched upon? that no allusion to this most solemn and interesting event in a Christian family should ever occur? that the question of previous fitness for baptism should never be raised, except in the case of adult Heathens; and then be dispatched in so summary a manner:—“They that

mers: the latter has brought upon us the name, Trinitarian, as a set-off. This, however, is an objectionable term, because it tells only half the truth; it should be Trinitarians: but the old word, Homöusiast, *Ὁμοουσιαστής*, (vide Suicer in voc.), or Co-essentialist, would afford a better description of the tenet intended, and be less open to sinister interpretation.

Is it not unfortunate that the Greek words *οὐσία* and *ὑπόστασις* have both been rendered, in the Latin, *substantia*, so that the latter, to prevent confusion, must be Englished, *subsistence*, or supplied by the explanatory term *πρόσωπον*, person? Neither con-

founding the substances, *ὑποστάσεις*, nor dividing the essence, *οὐσίαν*, is every where the language of Athanasius. *Οὐσία* is defined by this great doctor *τὸ κοινὸν τῶν τριῶν ὑποστάσεων* and is associated with the explanatory word *φύσις*, nature. *ὑπόστασις*, on the other hand, is explained by *πρόσωπον*, *χαρακτήρ*, or *ιδιότης*, person, character, or propriety; but the exact definition is *φύσις μετὰ χαρακτηριστικῶν ιδιωμάτων*, nature with characteristic peculiarities. Vide Athan. Syntagma ad quendam politicum. Vol. II., p. 517. Ed. Bened. But this by the way.

gladly received the Word¹:" "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God²." As if all that was required was a trustful willingness to *begin* that course of holy discipline and instruction, consequent upon a state of salvation,—that renovation of life, by which (the necessary aid of the Holy Spirit having been in baptism supplied,) salvation itself was with fear and trembling to be wrought out; a condition entirely fulfilled, as we have seen, in the child of a Christian parent, able and determined, engaged by every religious motive, and by all the charities of a Christian society effectually assisted, to "bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

But if this were the case, how, it may be asked, arose the variation and uncertainty of practice, prevalent in the primitive and early Church? The fact, I venture to think, is easily explained. As long as the Church was propagated principally by conversions from the Heathen, the baptism of adult converts must, of course, have been the prominent and characteristic use of the ordinance. Of these converts again, many, we know, remained undetermined, and from various causes postponed their own baptism. On the other hand, the Church itself, to prevent the scandal arising from too sudden and promiscuous an admission of new members, gradually adopted a more cautious and systematic catechism. Again, though in many instances whole households were converted and baptized, such was not by any means uniformly the case. Of the husband and wife, one was a believer, the other an infidel. This must have led to a difference of practice, as to the children, and these frequently remaining unbaptized, must, in after life, have made their own election, some in favour of the new, others of the old religion.

¹ Acts ii. 41.

² Acts viii. 37.

Very soon, false superstitions and mischievous opinions respecting baptism began to prevail, by which men deferred this holy solemnity to the latest possible period; that their past sins might thus, as it were by magic, be effaced, when there should be no fear of breaking the charm by after misconduct. Thus arose a state of things, neither desirable in itself, nor intended to continue: and hence the exhortations of the early fathers on this subject, (the homilies of Chrysostom for instance, for Whitsunday,) treat the question, (as the baptists very justly assert,) in a manner wholly inapplicable to a community of Christians, all of whom had been baptized in infancy.

This divided and uncertain practice, (for though some did not baptize their children, many did,) produced at first by necessity, continued for some time, from the force of habit and example, strengthened by mistaken views. When, however, the Church became finally established, and conversions from the Heathen were confined, as at present, to distant missions, the exceptions to infant baptism became more and more rare, and at length entirely disappeared; the great teachers of the Church seconding by their admonitions, what appears to me the inevitable tendency, and true intention of the institution itself; while the dogmatic form under which the doctrine of baptism was preached, and still more the expressive ritual with which it was accompanied, involved and preserved the spiritual truth, if not always spiritually interpreted.

On the whole, we may conclude that this truly pastoral ordinance, (originally adapted to the varying exigencies of the Church, in every state of progress, whether it were required to bring in Christ's "other sheep," or to preserve the lambs hereafter to be born within the fold; and fully exemplified by the apostles themselves, as well

in the first—its missionary, as in the second—its domestic character,) accommodated itself naturally to the mixed state of things, in which the Church, during the life-time of its inspired teachers, and long after their death, was necessarily placed: till having for three centuries struggled with a number of adverse influences, by which its original meaning was much obscured, and its real purpose often frustrated; at length, by the good providence of God, it settled into a shape consistent with the peaceful establishment of a Church at rest: a proof that “the little one had become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation¹.” And though this establishment has been from the first most imperfect, though we see but faint indications of that happy time, when “the wolf and the lamb shall lie down together,”—feeble efforts, yet ever blessed, to second the gracious designs of heaven,—yet have we in the baptism of our little ones, a sign that “Sharon is indeed a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in²,” and a pledge that *God’s* elect “shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble: for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, *and their offspring with them*.”

¹ Isa. LX. 22.² Isa. LXV. 10.³ Isa. LXV. 23.

NOTE TO SERMON XV.

ON THE FORM AND CEREMONIAL OF BAPTISM.

THE principles laid down in the preceding Sermon touching the rite of confirmation, are applicable to many other ecclesiastical ordinances. In their essence they are of apostolical origin. Not merely is the idea, which they realize, enounced in the written Word; but traces of the forms themselves, in a rudimental state, are not unfrequently discernible. To ascertain the gradual developement of these beginnings, we may properly have recourse to tradition. We shall thus learn, that many particular features, which we might be apt to consider accidental, make their appearance so early, and so generally in the Church, as to render it not improbable that even these are of apostolical institution, in the closest sense: or if not, that they exhibit the natural expansion of the original germ as determined by a force of growth from within. To both of these considerations we shall attach great weight: not such weight, however, as to set aside the power possessed by the Church itself in these matters, or to attribute a *secret* importance to such particulars, apart from the great mystery of godliness, which—by common consent, sanctioned by lawful appointment, and rendered, if not more binding, at least more affectingly venerable by the mild influences of antiquity—they variously set forth and promulge.

It is thus, also, that we are to apply to the ceremonial part of the two great sacraments, specially so named.

The words which issued from the lips, the actions which are repeated from the example of the Saviour Himself,—these, indeed, discharge a peculiar function, and carry with them a paramount sanction. All catholic rites are symbols of unity to the Church at large, but these are *the* symbols, in an eminent sense; and while the former are not lightly to be changed, even by public and lawful authority, much less neglected at the discretion of individuals, the latter have the seal of permanence stamped upon them by the Son of the Eternal, and are therefore essentially immutable. Thus far the form involves the life: and that which God has joined, it is not for man to put asunder. The shrine itself is sacred. But besides the unchangeable sacrament, an accessory ceremonial has been handed down to us, inclosing it, as it were, with an *outer* shrine, which we can neither regard as merely human, nor yet as wholly divine. Partly developed from within, partly modified from without, in proportions which it is impossible to determine, we shall not regard it as an indifferent matter, nor yet attribute to it a superstitious value. We shall not deem any change admissible, nor condemn every change as unauthorized.

To apply this to baptism, we have here a form of words, and a significant action, prescribed to us by our Lord Himself. The former has never occasioned a doubt. It contains a revelation of the divine nature, of which it is sufficient to say, that it is couched in the words of Him “who spake as never man spake,” and that to alter one jot or one tittle of this divine formulary, would be not simply presumption, but blasphemy. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him¹.” But a

¹ John i. 18.

further insight is permitted to us. Unspeakably important in itself, it is evidently most pertinent to the occasion, and throws an additional light on the nature of the baptismal mystery. We are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that is, in the power of the adorable One revealed in the Trinity of His essence; because in the mystery of regeneration we become children of the Father, in His only begotten Son, through the Holy Spirit of truth and holiness, thereby imparted;—because “we are born of God, and His seed remaineth in us, therefore we cannot sin;” “we are made one” with the alone sinless; our sinful nature is put off, our sins are remitted; we “receive an unction from the Holy One, and know all things; we are enlightened, and taste of the heavenly gift, and are made partakers of the Holy Ghost’.” Oh! deep abasement and confusion of face, when we compare that which we are in Christ, and Christ in us, by the Spirit of adoption crying Abba Father; with that which nevertheless we will to be, —fainting pilgrims, craven soldiers, disobedient children, —“working out our salvation,” fearfully at best,—struggling with, yet clinging to, “the body of this death’.”

¹ See 1 John iii. 9, 10; Heb. iv. 15;—ix. 26; 1 John ii. 20; Heb. vi. 4.

² Baptism, viewed in relation to its effects, affords a favourite theme for the eloquence of the Greek fathers. By St. Gregory Nyssen it is said to bring with it “remission of punishment, unloosing of bonds, close connexion and familiar intercourse with God, (as of one taken into His house,) the boldness of freedom, in the place of servile humiliation—parity of honour with angels.” *Ἀφεσιν*

εὐθυνῶν, λύσιν δεσμῶν, οἰκείωσιν πρὸς θεόν, παρρησίαν ἐλεύθεριον, ἀντὶ δουλικῆς ταπεινότητος ἰσοτιμίαν πρὸς ἀγγέλους. Quoted by Suicer voc. *Βάπτισμα*. By St. Basil it is described in language, the vividness of which is ill represented in a translation, as “redemption to captives, remission of debts, the death of sin, the regeneration of the soul, a vesture of light, a seal secure from fraud or violence, a conveyance to heaven, a procurer of the kingdom, (compare *Tu mihi*

Such is the solemn form of words in which we baptize. But there is also a significant action prescribed by the same authority. What is this? We know that it is

quodcunque hoc regni est—*con-*
cilias), the free-gift of adoption.”
Βάπτισμα αἰχμαλώτοις λύ-
τρον, ὀφλημάτων ἄφεσις, θάνα-
τος ἁμαρτίας, παλιγγενεσία ψυ-
χῆς, ἔνδυμα φωτεινόν, σφραγὶς
ἀνεπιχείρητος, ὄχημα πρὸς οὐ-
ρανόν, βασιλείας πρόξενον, νί-
οθεσίας χάρισμα.—Quoted by
Suicer voc. *Βάπτισμα*. By St.
Theoderet it is designated, still
more impressively, because more
definitely, as “a pledge of future
blessings, and a type of the re-
surrection to come, and a com-
munication of the Lord’s suffer-
ings, and a participation of the
Lord’s resurrection, and an outer
garment of salvation, and an inner
garment of gladness, and a lu-
minous robe, (as if to cover the
two former, and invest the whole
person,) or rather light itself.”
Ἀρράβων ἐστὶ τῶν μελλόντων
ἀγαθῶν, καὶ τῆς ἐσομένης ἀνασ-
τάσεως τύπος, καὶ κοινωνία τῶν
δεσποτικῶν παθημάτων, καὶ με-
τουσία τῆς δεσποτικῆς ἀνασ-
τάσεως, καὶ ἱμάτιον σωτηρίου,
καὶ χιτῶν εὐφροσύνης, καὶ
στολὴ φωτοειδής, μᾶλλον δὲ
αὐτὸ τὸ φῶς.—Quoted as above.
And with respect to this last at-
tribute, baptismal illumination
(*φῶτισμα*) is said by St. Gregory
Nazienzen to be “the clear re-
splendency of souls,—a remedy
against human infirmity,—a put-
ting off of the flesh,—a convey-
ance to God, (as it were the fiery
chariot of Elijah.)” *Τὸ φῶτισμα*
λαμπρότης ἐστὶ ψυχῶν· τὸ
φῶτισμα βοήθεια τῆς ἀσθε-

νείας τῆς ἡμετέρας· τὸ φῶτισμα
σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις· τὸ φῶτισμα
ὄχημα πρὸς Θεόν.—Quoted by
Suicer voc. *φῶτισμα*. With such
pomp and triumph did these early
teachers, lead, as it were, in pro-
cession the precious symbol of
their calling, through avenues of
splendid epithets, with joyous gra-
tulation, and loud attributions of
praise. A different tone of feeling
belongs to our age and clime, with
other forms of thought; and we
shall do ill to mimic what we can-
not imitate. These boundings of
a youthful spirit would hardly
comport with the chastened, medi-
tative, cautious inwardness of mo-
dern piety,—still less would they
be endured by the stern, impatient,
unimaginative fervours of modern
fanaticism, in which a maximum
of heat is combined with a mini-
mum of light:—a burning glow of
feeling, but alas! for the *λαμπρότης*
ψυχῶν, the bright transparency
of mind and spirit admitting and
transmitting the heavenly ray.
But wisdom is justified in all her
children, and the genial animation
of which we have been speaking,—
the gladsome fancy which saw in
every outward thing a figure of
that which is within,—was as really
good, in the time and place to
which it was natural, as it is felt
to be attractive: whereas, the same
thing, or the semblance of the
same, formally assumed, or pe-
dantically asserted, becomes both
mischievous and revolting. The
impulse which is *thus* given to
formalism is not life, but an extra-

baptism, either *in*, or *with* water; and we know that the first was the mode usually adopted in primitive times; but to ascertain whether this was the only, or even the preferable mode, we have only to ask ourselves the meaning of the word baptism, as determined by the intention of the rite: and when we find that the latter is simply *purification*, we can have no difficulty in giving to the former the general meaning of *washing*, whether by immersion, affusion, or aspersion. Indeed, that some compendious mode of baptism must have been resorted to even in apostolic times, would seem almost certain, from the numbers baptized at the same time. And as the use of water in this rite is merely emblematic, (though when united with the Spirit, it becomes a symbol and a sacrament,) to insist upon one mode to the exclusion of every other, independently of ecclesiastical consent, would be a bondage to the letter, closely bordering upon idolatry, even if it

neous, galvanic movement, that shows itself and dies, without hope of re-appearance, or power of reproduction.

When age associates with youth, it learns more by watching the instincts than adopting the judgments of its companion. This maxim does not apply in full to the reading of the fathers; in many of whom the flowers and fruits of wisdom are seen together, and we have as much to admire in the maturity of their judgment, as to enjoy in the juvenescence of their spirit: but it does apply in part, and may be usefully carried with us as a corrective. As text books, they must surely be received with caution, and a better understanding of their import than modern habits of thinking are likely to suggest.

The effects of baptismal grace, as

expressly pointed out in Scripture, may be referred to three heads, —Church membership, remission of sins, and spiritual illumination^a: all of which are involved in the idea of a new and heavenly birth, by which we are born anew from on high, into the family of God, put off the old man, and become partakers of the divine nature. The same truths are expressed metaphorically in a few passages, with a direct allusion to formal baptism; as by St. Paul, where he speaks of baptismal immersion, as a burial of the old man, followed by a spiritual resurrection; thus implying that death of sin, which is the true and only expiation. “Without shedding of blood there is no remission^b.”

^a 1 Cor. xii. 13; Acts ii. 38; John iii. 3.

^b Heb. ix. 22.

had not been made (most unnecessarily) the occasion and pretext of division¹.

Water, then, solemnly applied as the emblem of purification, in the name of the triune God, is the outward sign of the baptismal mystery, around which, as above stated, there has grown up a number of impressive ceremonies, partly suggested by the nature of the rite itself, and tending to develope its meaning, partly adapted to meet the varying requirements of time and circumstance. Of these much has been spoken unwisely, as well in praise, as in dispraise. Something of the kind, some human, yet established and venerable ritual is necessary for the decent observance of the rite itself,—as staves of shittim wood, overlaid with gold, to *carry* the ark². It may also be made most useful for edification, if only by the inquiries which it suggests, and the answers which it requires; the former embracing a most important cycle of doctrine; the latter, fixed, traditional, and catholic in the best and highest sense. Such, I say, *may* be the effect. On the other hand, it cannot be denied, that an emblematic service may not merely be carried to an inconvenient excess, but become the occasion of much serious mischief. Hence the necessity of moderate and practical views, which are never satisfied with *general* reasons, till

¹ If the (supposed) practice of the apostles, without reference to its intention, or allowance for circumstances, is professedly followed; to be consistent, the anti-aspersionists should confine themselves to open rivers. The modern accompaniments of the baptistery are much more ecclesiastical than primitive. By the same rule, the

apostolical chrism in sickness^a should be continued, not *in* the Church for the sake of unity, but out of it for the sake of schism,—here in England, where by competent authority, and with the wisest discretion, it has been called Nehushtan.

^a Exod. xxv. 13, 14.

^a James v. 14.

they have been proved to be specially applicable, without any overbalancing counter-weight.

To apply the above general remark therefore to baptism,—of the accessory ceremonial to which we have alluded, by far the most important part relates, as we have seen, to the sponsors. Many other impressive usages¹, formerly practised in “the Churches,”—such as the anointing with oil, to denote the unction of the Holy One; the white and shining robe, to indicate a regenerate purity; the torch borne in the hand, to represent the illumination of the Spirit; (ceremonies innocent, in themselves, and when properly explained, affecting in their use: but tending from their number to withdraw the attention from the sacrament itself, to its accessories, and in the event, from the corrupt state of the existing hierarchy, hiding the mysteries which they were meant to set forth;)—have most properly been discontinued in our own branch of the Church². One only practice of this kind has been retained, the sign of the cross, impressed upon the forehead after baptism—a ceremony which has been as injudiciously defended, as it has been unnecessarily condemned. Of the sign of the cross in general, it would be difficult to say whether as originally adopted by the early Christians, it was more simply impressive, more replete with affecting

¹ Ἔστι τοίνον τὸ μὲν βάπτισμα εἰς τὸν θάνατον τοῦ Ἰησοῦ διδόμενον· τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ, ἀντὶ ταφῆς· τὸ δὲ ἔλαιον, ἀντὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου· ἡ σφραγὶς ἀντὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ. κτ.λ.

² It is still useful to remember, and on fitting occasions to make mention of these rites, because the evidence which they afford of ca-

tholic doctrine is both more easy to collect, and less open to suspicion than any other, that of creeds, actually in general use, alone excepted. From books we learn what doctors have said, and councils resolved; but an established ritual proves what the Church did, and must have thought, *at large*.

and inspiring associations¹; or as subsequently employed by their successors, more frivolous, offensive, and degrading. At first an emblem of their profession in the midst of Heathen enemies,—held up for triumph as a banner, for defence as a shield, for comfort as a memorial, not seldom, perhaps, for edification as a monitor,—it gradually degenerated into a charm or amulet, sold by fraud and bought by folly, the intrusive substitute for devotion, a relique of paganism disguised as a Christian monument².

With respect to the *lawfulness* of its use in the particular instance, no question ought ever to have been

¹ This was admitted by Travers, in his dispute with Hooker, and the puritans whose sentiments he spoke.

² Had Gibbon transferred his “solemn sneer” from the Homœusian and Homœusian controversy, (an inquiry which will never cease to be interesting and important, while the eternal verities of the Godhead are studied, or God Himself, without idolatry, adored,) to that between the Greek and Latin Churches respecting the proper mode of signing the cross, it might have been equally piquant and less mischievous. If, however, he had carefully distinguished between the religion itself, and that which it was *not*, the system which had assumed its name, and (partially) usurped its place; his satire would have lost its sting, because it would have been just. His was not the lambent humour that plays around a forgotten superstition, except as it may involve a living truth. The Greeks differed from the Latins in their mode of signing the cross, principally in beginning from the

right. This was deemed a serious error on one side or the other. Their ancestors had practised augury with a precisely similar variation, in which, however, they had agreed to differ. The likeness is here not more striking than the unlikeness. Yet to a reflecting mind the earnestness, which thus wasted itself upon trifles and absurdities, bears witness to a deep conviction, existing somewhere, and exciting a moral influence, however mimicked and disgraced; while the boasted toleration of the Heathen indicates an universal indifference, that poisoned life at its source.

At a later period, the follies and mischiefs of the cross and crucifix were lost in those of the rosary, on which subject, vide omnino SOUTHEY'S *Vindiciæ Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*—a work written, it would seem, in anticipation of the present crisis. At the time, it was deemed a superfluous display of strength; a needless *coup de grace* upon a prostrate though struggling foe.

raised. Perfectly innocent in itself, it is made lawful by the authority by which it is ordained. The question of *expediency* may perhaps raise a difference of opinion. For some reason,—a wise and sufficient one, it can hardly be doubted,—it was retained at the reformation, when similar observances were torn away with no sparing hand. By some, this may be regarded rather as a wise concession to the prejudice of our ancestors, properly continued, because no favourable opportunity has occurred for completing an imperfect work. By others, an opposite judgment may be formed:—that a rite, so simple in itself, and so venerable in its origin, was exempted from the operation of a general, but, in the careful hands of our reformers, not a sweeping, principle, *for its own sake*, as deeming it less dangerous than edifying; and as waiting for a better interpretation, not to reject it as superfluous, when, at the lowest rate, it should have become harmless, but by removing the accidental misuse, to realize the natural benefit. And when we remember that this practice is, in some sort, the heir-loom of the British Churches distinctively¹, while in another way it is a monument of the primitive Church throughout the world; I, as a humble Presbyterian, tracing my orderly descent through the one to the other, and through both to Christ; tracing my descent, I say, as a minister of the word and sacraments through the Church in which I have my particular calling, to that from which it is itself derived; and seeing in this visible line, the symbol of a deep and concerning truth—the evidence and memorial of a spiritual oneness and religious sympathy, existing between all the elect, in every place, and throughout all time—a sympathy not inconsistent with, but warmed and animated by national and local special-

¹ See PALMER *on the Liturgy*, Vol. II.

ties, (as the best family-man is the truest patriot,—the true patriot the only philanthropist; yet without philanthropy no real patriotism—without the love of country no love of home, no genuine domestic affection: thus the particular and the general, mutually acting and re-acting, blend and unite in one universal charity;) possessed, I repeat, by these thoughts and feelings, I, as an individual, though attributing no mysterious efficacy to this usage, should be loth to break another link of that chain, which binds together in a common devotion, the four quarters of the globe, and those in each that live, with those that sleep, *in the Lord*.

SERMON XVI.
ON THE SACRAMENTS.

—
PART IV. HOLY COMMUNION.—SECTION I. THE REAL PRESENCE.
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JOHN vi. 53.

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.

It is a noticeable circumstance, not less instructive than characteristic, that the formal institution of the Lord's supper, which forms so prominent a feature in the three first of the four Gospels, is not so much as mentioned in the last. The same may be said of Christian baptism. All that we know—all that we believe of this sacrament—is to be learnt from St. John; for the catholic faith, on this point, he is indeed a main authority: yet the positive enactment of the rite itself does not appear in his narrative.

We naturally ask a reason for so remarkable a silence; and although it may plausibly be argued that the fourth gospel, being supplemental to the three former, passes over much important matter, and this, among the rest, as already committed to writing; yet as this principle is by no means rigidly carried out, it will not of itself account for any particular omission. It is evidently modified by other considerations; and remembering that the last hours of our Saviour's life are recorded in this precious document, with remarkable expanse and minute-

ness, the ground gone over by the earlier historians being here retraced without scruple, we may properly inquire, with a view to edification, *why* an event so solemn in itself, and so vital in its consequence, is left altogether unnoticed.

The true solution, if I mistake not, is to be found in the *positive* scope of the last Gospel. I mean that the omission itself is not without design. The task allotted to the beloved apostle was to exhibit his Master's *doctrine*. To explain the outward ordinances of Christianity by a reference to their historical connexion, and fix by written documents the visible economy of the Church,—in a word, to commemorate the positive enactments of our Lord, and His apostles, and thus secure to these appointments a specific and paramount sanction,—this necessary work had already been achieved. Thenceforth the tradition of the Church, confined within due limits, and tested by an infallible criterion, might, in these matters, be fairly left to speak for itself. But another need remained to be supplied. The well compacted frame-work—the expressive *form* of the Church—was given co-ordinately with an inward life, which it was intended to organize. This also, in so far as it is expressible by words, in so far as the spirit of man that is within him can be affected, through the communication of the Spirit of God, by expositions of faith, was to furnish the materials of a continuous tradition, more subtle and fleeting than the former, and no less urgently requiring to be Scripturally and authentically fixed. For this sublime undertaking the last surviving evangelist was every way providentially fitted. The beloved of Jesus by a peculiar title, and we may well believe, the depository of His inmost counsel, in so far as it has been revealed to

man, he appears in an eminent, though not exclusive sense, the prophet of the New Testament, conveying *oraculary* that "mind of Christ," which St. Paul, on the other hand, was specially instructed to *interpret*.

Now, although the mysterious truths of the Gospel are seldom enounced, even by our Lord Himself, without some allusion to their appointed symbols, enough to show the necessary connexion that is between them, yet we can discern a reason why, in this spiritual record, the latter are generally kept, not indeed out of sight, but, as it were, at a distance. A symbol is not the whole of that which it represents. It is *of it*, and in its proper place carries with it the full power of that for which it is to be taken. Baptism is regeneration. The Eucharist is communion with Christ. But these propositions are not convertible. We err greatly if we affirm that regeneration is baptism, communion with Christ nothing else but the sacramental expression under which it is specially effectuated. This is indeed idolatry; and we may receive it as a special provision against so fatal an abuse, to which alas! our sensual nature is but too easily liable, that we have the *doctrine* of the sacraments,—the living truths of which these are the proper exponents,—so particularly stated, in one portion of Scripture, as to teach us what they are in themselves, absolutely and universally, while at the same time we are reminded, if only by the cast of the phrase, of the forms under which they must appear in the sensible dispensations of the Church. We are thus admonished to give these divine operations an universal application; to take them into our inmost selves, and identify them with our own spirit; in a word, to cherish them in our hearts continually, through "faith that worketh by love," and thus, by God's

grace, increasingly to recognise their power in the entire man. To do this independently of a positive, instrumental religion, we shall soon find to be impracticable. If we are of an humble spirit, we shall not attempt it. It is not promised. We know that certain outward means have been provided for this end by Him, who knew what was in man; and we may be assured at starting, that they are necessary. Besides, we have no right to expect that for ourselves, as exempt individuals, which we know to have failed, when tried on a large scale, in the case of others. The first step taken is to substitute religious thoughts, or feelings, and sometimes mere fancies, for positive spiritual acts; a theory, or sentiment of godliness, thus taking place of the practice: while the general result is a selfish, calculating creed, a formal service, and a frigid devotion. The dreamy quietism of a few, and the fanatical extravagance of the many, who recognise no sanctuary but that of their own hearts, are mere varieties of the same will-worship, and present no real exception to the general rule.

But it is time to apply these remarks particularly to the subject pointed out in my text, which is no other than the great eucharistic mystery, of which I have repeatedly spoken,—the communion, namely, of the soul of man, with Christ, the incarnate Word, and in Him, with the whole body of the redeemed, of which Christ is the Head. The analogy between this and the doctrine of baptism, or regeneration, has been already stated. By the one we receive a new life, by the other we sustain it. By the one we are ingrafted spiritually into the invisible Church, by the other we enjoy this spiritual state: we continually renovate the connexion already formed, and, to employ a common, but somewhat loose expression, we realize it.

Not that we can make our baptismal life more real than it is: but we call it into activity, and recognise its existence; we *experience* its reality. Now, to the former of these divine operations the Lord of our being has, we know, attached the symbol of water:—water, according to promise, and through faith, given and taken as the sacrament of the new birth, and the instrument by which, practically speaking, it is to be obtained. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be *born* of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” Now compare with this the strikingly analogous language of the text. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” Surely we may expect to discover in this latter declaration some allusion to an outward mean, corresponding to that which stands out so plainly in the former.

It may be said that the expression is metaphorical. To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ, cannot, it may be urged, be understood in any proper sense. It means to feed by faith. Assuredly, yes! But what is to feed by faith? To believe, merely? Nay, to eat and to drink may mean to believe, but surely it means something more. If not, why disguise so simple a thought in so strange a dress? Besides, this is not an accident of language, born of the occasion, and immediately dismissed to be revived no more. Introduced by an astounding miracle, the feeding of five thousand men, with a quantity of food so small, as to present no more than the symbol of that divine sustenance, by which they were really satisfied; in reference to which, as if to explain its intent and meaning, the heavenly Teacher had admonished His disciples not to labour for the meat

that perishes, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man would give them; pronouncing Himself to be the true bread from Heaven, pre-signified in the typical manna;—solemnly asseverated by that Verily, verily, with which our Saviour was pleased to call the attention of his hearers, to the specific import of His words, the metaphor, if such it may be called, is followed out in detail, with the same marked emphasis, and express significancy. First, we have the declaration itself; “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” Then the blessed *consequence*; “Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” Next, the all-sufficient *reason*; “For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.” Then, the divine *effect*; “He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him,” illustrated by a comparison ineffably sublime and awful, “As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.” Lastly, it is referred to a most remarkable *type*, the difference between the substance and the shadow being strongly urged. “This is that bread which came down from Heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever¹.” Now, if by a metaphor we mean that figure of speech, by which, what is said of one thing is meant of another, the terms and meaning of the proposition being arbitrarily and fancifully associated, for the purpose of illustration, where shall we find an image so pliant and expansive, as to accompany the thought which it is merely borrowed to express, through so many variations? If such there be,

¹ John vi. 53—58.

must we not conclude that the link by which the verbal sign is connected with the reasonable intent, is not arbitrary, not a play of fancy, binding together, for a momentary use, things essentially different, by some accidental resemblance; but a natural and necessary affinity? This heavenly bread, this “meat and drink indeed,” this “eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of the Son of man,”—surely we are bound to show, not merely that these remarkable expressions, so often repeated, and so much diversified, imply belief, of which there can be no doubt, but what manner of belief is intended. There is, doubtless, a specific propriety in the Saviour’s words, and the explanation by which this is determined cannot be set aside, until some other solution, equally positive, and more plausible, is found to supply its place. If it be consonant with the whole tenor of the Gospel, and appears to have been at all times the actual faith of the Church, it cannot be set aside at all. It is not merely sufficient; it must be assumed as the truth.

Now, if we examine the several positions laid down by our Saviour on this awful subject, we shall find that they unite in one grand doctrine, of which we shall, perhaps, most fully possess ourselves by considering in order its elementary parts. These are stated in the sixth chapter of the Gospel by St. John, which forms the text of this discourse.

Now, in the first place, we recognise throughout, the notion of food or sustenance, given and received. Thus we may conveniently arrange our thoughts under three heads, relating severally to the gift itself, its divine author, and the manner in which it is received.

First, then, of the gift itself. The food which we are receiving from above is, it appears, in its own nature,

heavenly, spiritual, incorruptible. And that which it *is*, it imparts. It carries with it heavenly and spiritual blessings. In particular, it is the source and indispensable condition of immortality¹. It does not indeed *give* life, which is necessarily pre-supposed. It does not light up the first spark, but it sustains and feeds it. Again, it is essentially mystical;—uncontrolled by the laws of time, space, or matter. Like the manna of the Israelites, which, when gathered according to the law of God, admitted neither of excess nor deficiency, the larger collection leaving nothing to spare, and the lesser nothing to want; like the five loaves, with which five thousand men were all filled, yet the fragments that remained were more than the original quantity; so the food, herein expressly typified, is neither here nor there, neither now nor then, neither more nor less, but exists entire in every separate portion of the Church which it fills and upholds, at all times, and in all places, alike, and at once². And in this mystery, however it may move our admiration, there is nothing strange or inconsistent. It is simply that attribute of Godhead³ asserted by the Son of man when He said, “Before Abraham was, I am.” And again, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of you.” For indeed it is His own flesh and blood, His divine and mystical body of which He speaks. “The bread of God is He which cometh down

¹ John vi. 27, 32, 35, 50—*passim*; compare John iv. 13 14; 1 Cor. x. 4.

² Tu enim altissime, et proxime, secretissime et præsentissime, cui membra non sunt alia majora et alia minora, sed ubique totus es, et nusquam locorum es, &c.—*AUGUST. Conf. vi. 4.*

³ Anni tui dies unus; et dies tuus non quotidie, sed hodie, quia hodiernus tuus non cedit crastino; neque enim succedit hesterno. Hodiernus tuus æternitas; ideo coæternum genuisti, cui dixisti, *Ego hodie genui te.*—*AUGUST. Conf. xi. 16.*

from heaven, and giveth life unto the world¹." But of this hereafter.

And this food is given by God the Father, in the person of His beloved Son, out of pure grace and love to perishing sinners. "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven," are the Saviour's words; and, again, "The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world²." Now, as Nicodemus, on a parallel occasion, questioned our Lord as to the manner of the new birth, "How can a man be born, being old?" and was no otherwise answered than by a solemn re-assertion of its necessity, so the Jews strove among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" and met with a similar reply, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you³." *How* this was to be effected was left to be discovered by time. Something is, indeed, obscurely hinted; but the evidence of the visible Church, conjointly with the witness of the Spirit, was required to complete the revelation.

.That the gift was bestowed of pure grace is evident from the whole tenor of the Gospel; but, to keep within our present limits, this lesson is affectingly conveyed in the two miracles, (the latter no less typical than the former,) placed in connexion with this subject by our Saviour Himself. The manna that fell like dew from heaven,—unbought, unearned, unprayed for, every way unmerited,—on the thankless Israelites; the bread, mysteriously multiplied, to supply the wants of the no less ungrateful Galileans, equally imply, that the sole claim of the receiver is his pressing need, the sole motive of the Giver, that tender loving mercy which is over all His

¹ John vi. 33.

² John vi. 32, 51.

³ John vi. 52, 53.

works. Yet, as the Israelites were bound to gather the manna as it fell, and the Galileans had "followed" Jesus, because "they saw His miracles," so in those who would partake of the "true Bread," some co-operation, corresponding spiritually to these outward acts, is obviously required; some co-operation and a certain determinate condition, answering to that fore-shadowed by God's ancient people, and in a certain sense, by those outward followers of the Saviour who now assembled around His person, "divers of them having come from far¹." "He that *cometh* unto me," said our Lord, "shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." The spiritual communicant, (the reception, of which we are speaking, is, in fact, as we shall see presently, a *communion*,) must have seen the Saviour, must have come to Him, must have believed on Him. There must, consequently, be a consent of the will and the reason, conspiring with an outward manifestation, too often, it would appear, bestowed in vain. "Ye, also," said our Lord to the faithless multitude, "ye, also, have seen me and believed *not*." In the more favourable case, however, we must suppose that a divine influence has been already communicated. Hence, we read of those who are "given" by the Father to His eternal Son, of whom none are to be lost. "This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which *He hath given me* I should lose nothing, but should *raise it up again at the last day*." And, again, it is affirmed by the Saviour, that "no man can come unto Him, except the Father draw him²." Who these are, individually, will be made known at the last day; but the *description* of persons to whom they belong, is pointed out by the Lord Himself: "They are those of whom" it is

¹ Mark viii. 3.² John vi. 36.³ John vi. 37, 39, 44.

written in the Prophets, "And they shall be all taught of God¹;" those pilgrim warriors, multiplying as they wandered, and now, according to promise, a "great nation," still militant on earth, yet living under a covenant of peace, and looking forward to be established in righteousness; prophetic figures under which we have long been taught to recognise the Church and family of Christ².

We see, therefore, that *faith* is required on the part of that spiritual Israel, who, by the merciful dispensation of the Almighty, are *called* to partake of the "bread from heaven," as the necessary condition of its being received as sustenance. So only can the divinely implanted food be *assimilated*, or converted into that spiritual substance, which it is intended to sustain. This process has sometimes been briefly called *assimilation by faith*.

Lastly, we see that the particular reception of this food is, properly, a participation with others, that is to say, it supposes a plurality of persons, in fact, "a great multitude which no man can number³;" who are, by this very mean, united and made one body. This mystery, which we cannot contemplate without a sense of awful joy, inexpressibly cheering and edifying, our Lord has graciously condescended to explain. The food of which we speak being no other than the body of Christ, His real flesh and blood, in a proper, though spiritual sense,—produces, when verily and indeed received by the righteous, (*however* and *whenever* this takes place,) that mutual indwelling, ("Abide in me, and I in you," are His own solemn words to His Church⁴,) in which consists the essence and meaning of divine communion. Now, if the

¹ John vi. 45.² Isaiah liv. *passim*.³ Rev. vii. 9.⁴ John xv. 4: compare xvii. 21—23.

same Christ dwell in many, and many in Him, a real, though supernatural, unity is the necessary result; a unity of which we can obviously form no *conception*, but which we may know to be most agreeable to reason. For thus, the natural life¹ of man binds together all the members of his animal frame, through which it is transfused, entire in every part, into one whole; not a mere assemblage of material particles,—the object of the senses,—but the result and manifestation of an unseen, but ever operating presence, perceived by the mind. And thus the soul of man—his intellectual life—sustains that “spiritual body,” to which it corresponds, and by which it is individualized, (its true co-partner and projected self,) from year to year, amid the change and flux of all things worldly, identifying it by a link which time cannot weaken, nor death itself, (we are assured,) be able to interrupt. We are *conscious* then of two mysterious facts, closely analogous to the former, if not the very same, the same divine energy differently modified;—Of that still deeper presence which connects the spirit in every man with Him who gave, by Him who redeemed, through Him who inspires and sanctifies it, with All in Each, and thus with the primal One, Whose throne is far above all manifested being—Holy and Good—in *Whom our life is hid with Christ*²; of this ineffable mystery, we are not indeed conscious, except in so far as consciousness itself is taken up in the higher form of *conscience*.

And let not this be set aside as unauthorized speculation. What, let me ask, is that “wisdom” which is

¹ Ἔστι σῶμα ψυχικόν, καὶ ἔστι σῶμα πνευματικόν. Οὕτω καὶ γέγραπται· ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν | ζῶσαν· ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν. 1 Cor. xv. 44, 45.
² Col. iii. 3.

continually “spoken among the perfect?” And be the answer sought from the Liturgy, properly so called, the Communion Service of the Universal Church, in every age, and under every modification; more especially from that of our English Churches, in which the awful *doctrine* of the Eucharist is exhibited in language as simple as it is sublime, not merely without any admixture of error, but without any inconvenient ambiguity of expression¹.

Or, rather let us seek to understand the Saviour’s words, by comparing them with His own divine comment. This “bread from heaven,” this food of the soul, *how* is it given to the Church? Surely we cannot but remember that the Lord Himself, “the same night that He was betrayed,” “took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and

¹ May we not attribute the lamentable neglect of sacramental communion, observable even among Church-going people in this country, in part, at least, to its being represented *more* as a duty, than as a privilege; a command to be obeyed rather than a gift to be enjoyed? Thus, while much is said of the *necessity*, little is added on the *nature* of the practice, which becomes more fearful in exact proportion as it is made less attractive; till the awe with which the ministries of heaven are properly guarded, losing its august form and sun-lit countenance, swells and darkens into a mist-like phantom, strange, dreadful, and repulsive. How many Christians do we meet with, especially among the lower order of tradesmen and mechanics; men, in other respects, of religious habits, who regard the Lord’s table with a vague appre-

hension, often amounting to terror, deeming themselves unworthy of the *sign*, while yet they confidently believe themselves to participate in the *thing*. But as this is a painful feeling, it too often passes into contempt; the *grace* being arrogantly claimed, while the *mean* is slighted and disdained. Surely, this has arisen originally, and in fact, from want of knowledge; and this again from that dislike of speculative inquiry, which has become a national characteristic. Plain, practical, and useful,—yes, let our pastoral teaching be all this: but let us not confine ourselves to so timid and negative a course of instruction, as to leave the prayers in the communion service; nay, the greater part of the Apostle’s Creed, as unintelligible to the mass of the people, as if they were still locked up in a foreign language.

gave it to His disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins¹." *This is my body! This is my blood!* Is it possible not to connect these solemn words with the parallel expressions in my text, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you?" Or do we need the further assurance contained in the pointed question of the apostle, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" Are we not bound to find some common truth, at once a heavenly mystery and a practical lesson, equally affirmed in all these divine appointments? Do not they evidently convey the same doctrine, and must they not be linked together in a common exposition? Or must we inquire further into the faith of the primitive Christians on this point, and ask how *they* were taught to understand their Master's solemn ordinance? Whether the Churches left by the apostles throughout the world, regarded it as an admonitory memorial *merely*, or as a proper mean and instrument of spiritual strength and refreshment?

Oh! while we regard with shame and sorrow the impious fiction, that the natural substances of bread and wine are changed by the ministry, and at the will of man, into the natural body of Jesus Christ; while, to speak plainly, we explode the papal doctrine of transubstantiation as a mere contradiction in terms, and shrink with horror from the idolatrous practices to which it has given rise, must we, therefore, refuse to confess with all saints,

¹ Matt. xxvi. 26—28; 1 Cor. xi. 23.

² 1 Cor. x. 16.

that in some sense the symbolic eucharist is, that which in Scripture it is said to be, the body of Christ, hereby truly received, and fed upon by the faithful communicant? Not that natural body, with its fleeting accidents and finite dimensions, in which the Redeemer, in mystical union with a human soul, was pleased to incorporate His adorable essence, when, "being made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death," he "tabernacled" among the sons of men. This is, indeed, in heaven transfigured and glorified, the first fruits of the dead already gathered. Born, nourished, and matured,—living and dying,—reviving and ascending,—again to come in like manner as it was seen to go,—in this body, made of a woman, made with human lineaments and proportions, "according to the beauty of a man,"—the Christian believer contemplates the pattern of his own resurrection, his own individual life, and conscious identity in the eternal world.

Nor yet is it a mere image, or arbitrary sign of this body with no inherent divinity, no substantial excellence, no living efficacy beyond that which pious thought may infuse in a solemnized and excited state of feeling, when the heart, listening and expectant, is deceived by the echo of its own suggestions, and the mind mistakes for outward realities, the reflection of its own forms. The "reasonable service" of the Gospel acknowledges no such shadow play. A *right* reception is indeed indispensable: on this point we cannot insist too often or too strongly. Still there must be something to receive—something positive, external, given. The craving appetite does not *make* the food by which it is satisfied, though it is the necessary condition under which the latter is converted into nourishment. "The body of Christ is given, taken,

and eaten, in the supper, only after a divine and heavenly manner'." Such is the emphatic protest of our Church against the Romish superstition. But the body of Christ is taken, given, and eaten, not only in other ways, (of which there is no question in this article,) *but in the supper*. And, again, "the mean whereby the body of Christ is eaten and received in the supper, is faith." But faith supposes a real object, else it is a mere dream, a voluntary self-deception. Faith could not enable the communicant to partake of Christ's body in this sacrament, unless it were really present. We eat and receive, not because we believe, but because our belief is true. We eat and receive by believing, not the promises of God in a general way, but "the promises of God made to the Church in that sacrament." The faith which is essential to a process, is, of course, determined to that process. The instrumental faith of the eucharist, therefore, can be no other than faith in the eucharist.

But if the body of Christ, of which we partake in the Lord's supper, be not that *natural* body which was once on earth, and is now in heaven, the organical exponent, and necessary correlative of a human life—nor yet a mere arbitrary sign, commemorating the acts and sufferings which that body was assumed to undertake and undergo,—if it be connected with the first, only by the omnipresence of the Godhead, and identical with the second, only in respect of one important use;—if it be far other, and far more than either of these, what definition are we to affix to a phrase so often and so earnestly reiterated by our Saviour, serving to the expression of a mysterious truth, in the due reception of which, our very life, it appears, is essentially and eternally involved?

¹ Article xxviii.

And now a reverent caution is indeed most necessary, while, in humble reliance on that Spirit, who giveth wisdom to the simple, we search the Scriptures, and seek, in obedience to the apostle's precept, to "add to our faith, knowledge."

And here I must again refer to the very peculiar terms in which the Saviour, on many former occasions, was pleased to reveal the great "mystery of godliness," whether as an object of holy contemplation or of practical duty. To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ seems at first sight, so very different a thing from eating His flesh, and drinking His blood, that if the latter phrase had occurred but in a single passage, we should have seen that it required a specific explanation. But when we meet with the same, or similar expressions, employed on very different occasions, both by our Lord and by His apostles; when we find them repeated with many verbal changes, but no difference of signification; when we contrast the emphatic simplicity of the truth declared, with the mysterious urgency of the precept enjoined; lastly, when we see the whole Church, immediately and universally united in adopting the same language, not as a loose, metaphorical way of speaking—not as a conventional and arbitrary phraseology—but with guarded literality, and technical precision, fearing to vary one jot or tittle from the exact revelation which they had received; nay, when we find the same doctrine translated by the Lord Himself into fixed visual images, and so bequeathed in His last testament, to the perpetual use and conservation of His disciples,—we have accumulated evidence that some mysterious fact, of vast import, intimately involved in the economy of grace, is *properly* and *distinctly* presented in these and the like expressions, to the faith of reason: a

fact addressing itself in this way, and in no other, to the experimental knowledge of mankind.

That this fact is immediately connected with the incarnation of the filial Godhead, cannot admit of a question. When we are enjoined, or rather, when it is declared to be necessary for the preservation of our spiritual life, to eat the flesh, and drink the blood of Christ, (for the announcement of the fact precedes the delivery of the command; when the disciples were directed to "Take and eat," they already knew, that except they ate, they had no life,) another awful fact was pre-supposed. The Word was made (or became) flesh. In that divine prelude, by which the spiritual evangelist introduces the inter-linked succession of revealing harmonies, which compose his heavenly strain, this is the first note struck—the key-note of the whole. The Word which was in the beginning with God,—the Word which *was* God,—became flesh. In this fundamental truth, the whole mystery of godliness, in all the fulness of its august proportions, lies involved. Further than this I shall not venture to inquire. Who shall dare to delineate that mighty form, or fix the shape in which it is revealed to his own intuition¹? Invisible to the eye of sense, it walks the

¹ Et inde admonitus redire ad memetipsum, intravi in intima mea, duce te; et potui, quoniam factus es adjutor meus. Intravi, et vidi qualicumque oculo animæ meæ, supra eundem oculum animæ meæ, supra mentem meam, lucem incommutabilem; non hanc vulgarem et conspicuam omni carni; nec quasi ex eodem genere grandior erat, tanquam si ista multo multoque clarius claresceret, totumque occuparet magnitudine. Non hoc illa erat; sed aliud, aliud

valde ab istis omnibus. Nec ita erat supra mentem meam sicut oleum super aquam, nec sicut cœlum super terram; sed superior, quia ipsa fecit me, et ego inferior, quia factus sum ab ea. Qui novit veritatem, novit eam; et qui novit eam, novit æternitatem. Caritas novit eam. O æterna veritas, et vera caritas, et chara æternitas! tu es Deus meus; tibi suspiro die ac nocte. Et cum te primum cognovi, tu assumpsisti me, ut viderem esse quod viderem, et non-

earth with power and great majesty; a personal presence, unpicturable, unexaminable: whose head is in heaven, dazzling with glory, before which man falls upon his face, (as before the transfigured Jesus¹), and may not tell the vision! Yea, verily, Christ is a personal presence in the earth, seen, heard, and felt, through faith, by eye, and ear, and heart: the illumination of all light, the inspiration of all spirit, the essence of all truth, the substance and divinity of all enduring realities. For THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH.

The fleshly nature thus assumed; the fleshly nature *as* thus assumed, and in mystical, but most real union with Him by whom it is assumed,—interpenetrated by His adorable essence, and thus rendered powerful, incorruptible, a new creation, holy, heavenly, and immortal—this is the body of the Christ. Into this body, we, the children of the dying Adam, must be born again of water, and of the Spirit. Of this body, we, the children of adoption and grace, must continually eat and drink; thus nourishing the seed of the Word: thus escaping the corruption which is in the world through lust: thus becoming partakers of the divine nature: thus, I say, becoming partakers

dem me esse qui viderem. Et reverberasti infirmitatem aspectus mei, radians in me vehementer, et contremui amore et horrore; et inveni longe me esse a te in regione dissimilitudinis, tanquam audirem vocem tuam de excelso: Cibus sum grandium; cresce, et manducabis me. Nec tu me in te mutabis, sicut cibum carnis tuæ; sed tu mutaberis in me.—AUGUST. *Confess.* vii. Sec. 16.

¹ Καὶ οὐ θαυμαστὸν τὴν φύσει τρεπτὴν—ὑλὴν—ὅτε μὲν ἔχειν ποιότητα, καθ' ἣν λέγεται τὸ

Οὐκ εἶχεν εἶδος οὐδὲ κάλλος. ὅτε δὲ οὕτως ἔνδοξον καὶ καταπληκτικὴν καὶ θαυμαστὴν ὡς ἐπὶ πρόσωπον πρσεῖν τοὺς θεατὰς τοῦ τηλικούτου κάλλους κ.τ.λ.—Ἐχειδέ τι καὶ μυστικὸν ὁ λόγος, ἀπαγγέλλων τὰς τοῦ Ἰησοῦ διαφόρους μορφὰς ἀναφέρεσθαι ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ θείου λόγου φύσιν, οὐχ ὁμοίως φαινομένου τοῖς τε πολλοῖς, καὶ τοῖς ἀκολουθεῖν αὐτῷ εἰς ὑψηλὸν (ὃ ἀποδεδώκαμεν) ὅρος δυναμένοις. *Orig. Contra. Cels.* lib. vi., p. 328. [Cant. 1677.]

of Christ—"feeding upon him in our hearts, by faith, with thanksgiving."

This *thanksgiving*, this particular offering of prayer and praise, so united with faith in the redemption wrought by the incarnate Word, and determined to the celebration of a holy feast, in which the spiritual food of the soul is duly received with open confession and inward acknowledgment, all motions of mind and spirit fitly corresponding—this is the Eucharist, whereby we are authentically "assured of God's favour and goodness towards us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of His Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people¹."

And, "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." Only by participating through faith, in the fleshly nature of Christ, are we redeemed from the power of sin and death to which our own fleshly nature is enslaved. "In us," that is, in *our* flesh, "dwelleth no good thing." We need to be taken up into a higher, better nature, our own through Christ, and in this way to be associated, in the blessed effect of His atoning passion. But in this high estate we need to be supported by "food convenient;" food, therefore, of the same nature with that body which it is required to sustain. This is indeed an unutterable mystery. We cannot say how the incarnation of the eternal Son is made the mean of bringing many sons to glory. We cannot describe the mode in which "our bodies are made clean by His body, and our souls washed by His most precious blood." But we do know that the Lord has appointed bread and wine to be given and received, with high and reverent solemnity, as specific symbols

¹ Communion Service.

of that fleshly nature which He is pleased to make His own; symbols not converted by sacerdotal mediation into any substance foreign to their own, but *recognised* by the recipient himself, through faith, in the order and ministry of salvation, as verily and indeed connatural with that body into which we have been ingrafted, and with which we thus keep up a strengthening and refreshing communication.

Are we then to conclude that the awful doctrine delivered by our Saviour in the text, is to be understood exclusively of the Lord's supper? Far from it. The eucharistic celebration does not limit to itself the blessed communion which it exhibits. It was ordained, not to constitute this divine mystery, but to set it forth and make it effectual. To set it forth, in a distinct, authentic, form, or representation, appreciable by the Church at large; itself a brief summary of revealed knowledge, "speaking wisdom among the perfect," in which all the rays of divine truth meet as in a focus, and from which they are again radiated, as from a secondary source and centre of heavenly illuminations; (even as the material light had already been substantiated by the Creator, and revealed throughout the world dispersedly, before it was collected in any finite body, or focal luminary¹;) and to make it effectual by connecting it with a positive, voluntary act of faith, consciously exercised, and, as it were, centred upon it. Thus we are naturally led to a more particular consideration of the rite itself, regarded as an historical institution, outwardly celebrated in our congregations. But this must be reserved for a separate discourse.

Lest, however, the views already put forth, should be thought, even in passing, merely speculative, I recapitu-

¹ Gen. i. 3—14.

late in a practical form. The doctrine which I have endeavoured to illustrate, is no other than the *real presence* of Christ in the sacrament of the Lord's supper. All that we are required to *understand* in this mysterious question, is negative. It is most necessary that we should distinctly know, and constantly remember what it is *not*. It is not a sacerdotal change, or conversion of the natural substances of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. This definition is repudiated by reason as unmeaning, and by conscience as idolatrous. It is not a mere ceremony or scenic representation of the body and blood of Christ. This explanation is rejected by reason, as nugatory and evasive; by conscience, as profane and comfortless. What it is, cannot be defined in words. It is suggested indeed by every separate declaration of the truth as it is in Jesus; we are led towards it in all our sacred meditations, to our great and endless comfort: we arrive at it practically in the due reception of the sacrament itself; but in whatever way we feel ourselves possessed of it, by whatever means we recognise its power, it is known only by faith, and learnt only by prayer.

Let us pray. And if we need the voice of a practised saint to lead our supplications, let our devout aspiration take this language: "Lord, what need I labour in vain, to search out the manner of Thy mysterious presence in the sacrament, when my love assures me Thou art there? All the faithful who approach Thee with prepared hearts, they well know Thou art there; they feel the virtue of divine love going out of Thee, to heal their infirmities, and to inflame their affections; for which, all love, all glory be to Thee¹."

¹ *The Practice of Divine Love*.—BISHOP KEN; p. 116.

NOTE TO SERMON XVI¹.
ON PROTESTANTISM AND CATHOLICITY.

IN reading works of religious controversy, it is necessary to keep the particular scope of the writer constantly before us: otherwise, the effect upon our minds will not seldom be the reverse of what is intended, and we shall not only fail of obtaining instruction, but be positively misled; and this, whether we adopt the Author's views, or, as sometimes happens, shrink back from them into the opposite extreme. We must see whether we belong to the class of persons specially had in view; and if not, we must place ourselves in their situation, and view the subject, for the time, with their prepossessions.

To give an instance:—It has naturally happened that many of the most famous apologies for the English Church, written soon after the Reformation, were addressed either wholly, or principally, to Romanists, to whom alone a large share of the reasoning applies. We have here little difficulty in making the requisite allowance. We know the peculiar character of the times, and we study the opinions of great men long since at rest, with comparative fairness and impartiality. But the same line of

¹ This note is inserted in this place, partly to show in what light the Author would wish the preceding and following Sermons to be viewed, and partly to relieve the attention of the reader by a change of style and subject. If, however, it should be felt to interrupt the general argument, it may be passed over, and read as an Appendix to the whole volume.

discussion has been adopted in rather a different spirit, and under circumstances, similar in some respects, but quite without a precedent in others, in certain recent treatises, highly ingenious, but requiring to be read not merely with candour, but with caution. The arguments employed are, for the most part, of the kind entitled *ad hominem*, where the adversary is confuted on his own grounds: but whether those grounds are really tenable or otherwise is not considered. Thus, if the Church of England be pronounced by Romish theologians schismatical, secular, disunited, variable, irregular, and informal, all these charges, in all their shapes, are shown to lie, with equal or greater force, against their own communion.

Perhaps, however, there is more of logical dexterity than effective persuasion in this species of advocacy. Its effect is, in general, rather to silence than convince. If the opposed party be sincere, as well as consistent in their opposition; that is to say, if they really believe their objections to be valid, they may, indeed, be led to desert their own position, but cannot be expected to take up yours. You have retorted the charge, not solved the difficulty; and at best merely weakened the cause of your enemy, without strengthening your own. You have bid him look at home; and as this is always taken as an implied confession, you expose yourself to the brunt of an imputation, which your opponent after all may find means to evade. I will not say that this mode of argument is without its use; but it should be confined within narrow limits, and never trusted to alone.

But the inexpediency, of which I speak, will be rendered still more apparent, when we remember that no book is read by those alone for whom it is intended, and

that if the Romanist be induced to abandon his attack by the fear of retaliation, it will infallibly be pressed by those who are not so restrained. To retaliate a blow is not to avert it. The arrow which you plunge into the breast of your adversary is thought to have left a wound in your own; and those who make common cause neither with the assailant, nor with the assailed, (including the whole body of Protestant dissenters,) regard a contest so conducted as *bellum internecinum*, the progress of which is watched with no friendly eyes by a large number of spectators. In fact, you have suggested doubts to the undecided which you have not attempted to dissipate, and wrenched a weapon from the hands of one enemy, only to place it in the hands of another.

There are but two ways in which an objection can fairly be removed: by denying its force, or disproving its applicability. Where neither course is open, it should be admitted with a candid regret. The defence which confesses to no imperfection proves too much, and is felt to be special pleading. But many of the charges, discussed in the treatises of which I speak, gain far more by the courtesy with which they are entertained, than they lose by the ingenuity with which they are framed. They should be quashed *in limine*, as merely trifling and irrelevant: otherwise they acquire a gravamen from the mode in which they are received. Alas! when will the Church in this country learn to know the heavenly temper of that armour in which she is indeed arrayed!

If, however, this mode of proceeding is adopted in a spirit of compromise, and the principles of the Roman Church in these particulars are admitted, not merely for the sake of argument, but as a common ground of truth, such conciliation is not merely hopeless, but the attempt

suicidal. The English and Romish Churches mutually anathematize each other. They each claim to themselves, and deny to their opponent, the title of Catholic, in so far as they are mutually opposed. The denunciations yearly thundered from the Vatican, are not more decided in their character than the *protest* put forth by our own Church, in her Articles and Homilies, to say nothing of the oaths to which, in various ways, she is a party. In fact, her actual position is a continued protest of the strongest kind; and this attitude cannot be abandoned without pleading guilty to schism of the most aggravated description. If there be not something fundamentally different, and absolutely irreconcilable between the two Churches, the act of separation, taking place as it did, was inexcusable. The mere desire of independence could not have justified so fearful a breach of peace. To appeal, therefore, to Romish authority, even to disarm a Romish antagonist, is to place the question in a false point of view.

But, in fact, the Reformation in England, and wherever else it has been worked out on its own principles, should be regarded, not in any degree as the loss, but as the re-assertion, of catholicity. When, by confounding the Church of Rome with the Church of Christ, (as if the latter were not represented equally by *all* the visible Churches throughout the world,) and by taking the court of Rome as a fixed ecclesiastical centre (as if the omnipresent Christ were not *everywhere* the centre of His Church,—an idea fully carried out in the episcopal system of the apostles, but utterly lost sight of in the papacy): when by these and the like carnalizing views, with their corresponding practices, an *anti-Catholic* spirit had not merely diffused itself through the whole of Christendom,

—the Western or Latin portion more particularly,—but had acquired in the monastic orders, the celibacy of the clergy, and other papal institutions, a complete organization of the most effective kind; the sounder portion of the Church, becoming more and more aware of the false position which it occupied, was at length, by the providence and assistance of Almighty God, prompted and enabled to resume its proper character. Then it was that the remainder, still identifying itself with the Church of Rome, *cut itself off*, outwardly and overtly, from the Church at large. Anti-Catholic in spirit, by the Council of Trent, it became anti-Catholic in fact. That within its pale are numbered many Catholic Christians, is not more a charitable hope than a rational belief, but the Church itself is in schism. Lower ground than this cannot be taken with safety. Catholicity cannot be represented as the common characteristic of our own Church and that of Rome, to the exclusion of other separatists. It is destroyed by the usurpation of the one party, or by the rebellion of the other. To evade this consequence by the example of the Greek and Latin Churches, is to concede the question to the Romanist, and to beg it from every one else. Our title to the name of Catholic, must be maintained against the Romanist on the one hand, and the Dissenter on the other, by showing what it really means. It is not *Catholicism* in the sense which common usage has affixed to this term. It is not the coherence of all parts with one *part*, but the co-inherence of all in each, and of each in One, Who is all, being *in* all. It is the correlative of unity—catholicity being to the parts, what unity is to the whole. Again, it is a living energy, not a mere accident (as it is written, “Christ *worketh* all in all’;”)

¹ Col. iii. 11.

continually tending to realize itself, that is, to make itself outward and objective, in the form of a *visible* unity. So prayed the chief Shepherd for His flock, "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me¹." And as this tendency must have operated from the beginning; as it must have manifested itself to a great extent, and under the most favourable circumstances, during the lifetime of the apostles; and as its effect is to bind together the past with the present, in the future; it cannot but have produced an outward form, cognizable to mankind at large, and so far invariable in its character as to be from the first apparently and demonstrably identical. Now these positions are equally irreconcilable with Romanism on the one hand, and with independency on the other. But if Catholicity and Unity be convertible terms, how can two portions at open war with each other, be equally catholic, equally in union?

I speak of the *idea*, and of the *outward* reality, in so far as it corresponds to it. In so far as the Churches of the East and of the West, of England or of Rome, are opposed to each other, the schismatic party, whichever it may be, is cut off from the unity of the body. For these are spiritual relations depending on the presence of the Unseen, though outwardly manifested. But "envying, and strife, and divisions, are carnal:" and as the guilt of such discord shuts out an individual from Church privileges, so it is sufficient to unchurch any number or body of individuals, however large. Will the Lord suffer any two portions of His Church to partake together of His communion, "between whom He perceiveth malice and

¹ John xvii. 21.

hatred to reign?" Will He not exclude one, or indeed both, if neither party will be persuaded to "a *godly* unity¹?" I say, a *godly* unity, for with the "mystery of iniquity," though developed in the Church itself, all fellowship must be abjured. And here it is the formal expression of disunion, the public recognition of variance, which constitutes the schism, individuals being only so far involved in the guilt of the body to which they belong, as they have actually consented with it, whether directly or indirectly, whether before or after the act. This maxim is sufficiently fearful in its operation, when we consider how generally individuals do take upon themselves the acts of the party in which they are enrolled, but still consistent with that moral sense, which we cannot set aside, even when we have persuaded ourselves to resist its dictates, as an exercise of faith and duty,—a sore perplexity which, I make bold to assert, is neither required nor admitted by "the truth as it is in Jesus."

All inquiries respecting the visible Churches of Christ are wont to be embarrassed, (most unnecessarily, as I think,) by too anxious considerations of this sort. How, it is asked, can we bear to unchurch so many millions of our fellow-Christians,—many of them persons of earnest piety and virtuous life,—men who love Christ in sincerity, however erroneous their creed, or unfortunate their ecclesiastical position? These scruples are often expressed and are still more extensively entertained, by some in reference to the ancient and corrupt ecclesiastical bodies of Rome and the east; by others, to the modern and irregular groups, which divide and subdivide the Protestant name. I have already made my own protest on this criti-

¹ Rubric to the Communion Service.

cal point¹. But the interests both of truth and charity, require that clear and definite views on this subject should be set forth, notwithstanding the difficulties which existing habits of thought oppose to that higher logic of reason, by which alone they can be determined². At all events, a practical rule is required: for where, on the one hand, the formation of opinion takes place under the influence of the above-mentioned charitable feelings; the equitable administration of the divine government, tempered with mercy, being assumed as a *basis* of argument, this charity, though in itself “an excellent way,” is too often pursued at the expense of truth; while it is contended that no forms of belief, no outward manifestations of divine favour, can be of more than secondary consequence: all creeds and all situations supplying that course of moral probation, on which the final sentence of the Almighty will in every case depend. And where, on the other hand, this indifferency is regarded with just apprehension, as immediately tending to infidelity, and certain fixed principles of belief are followed out with reckless intrepidity into their consequences, no matter what natural perceptions, or reasonable convictions *of another kind* they may happen to cross, this proper regard to the eternal interests of truth is, too often, retained by the sacrifice of charity. And although there is something in self-consistency which cannot but secure respect, yet

¹ See Note to Sermon VI., page 95.

² It were to be wished that logic and dialectics were distinguished, the first as the organ of reason, the second of the understanding. Thus the one dealing with absolute or axiomatic truth, would supply the grounds of knowledge; the other,

explaining the relations or categories of things, would teach us how to express it: the one would inform our thoughts, the other would arrange them: the first would show us what to affirm, λέγειν, the other how to discourse, διαλέγειν.

when it evidently contravenes the moral sense of good men; when, for instance, it leads to frightful and merciless conclusions, (however legitimately these may have been deduced,) relative to the condition of individuals, it not only throws discredit on principles, in themselves most certain and most holy, but produces a recoil of feeling, only too favourable to the wretched shallow liberalism, which it is intended to oppose. If, however, it can be shown that this is not the only alternative; that the dilemma, of which so much use is made in argument, has no existence in the truth of things; that, in fact, the strictest Church doctrines may be entertained, consistently with the most favourable allowance for the outward disadvantages under which large portions of the Christian name appear to labour, all difficulty will be removed, and the banner of charity be unfurled in the sacred cause of truth.

Now to set this matter in the true light, it must be premised, that when we speak of a Church, (whether as catholic or schismatical, whether as apostolic or self-constituted, whether as orthodox or heretical, whether as pure or corrupt,) we cannot be supposed to mean a mere aggregate of individuals, of whom nothing could be predicated in common, beyond a certain outward relation:—certainly nothing good, and surely, therefore, nothing evil. Their state is purely hypothetical, depending on personal qualifications, varying in every separate case, and manifestly known to God only. I do not say that it is not affected by their outward position. Far from it. What I affirm is, that in speaking of a Church, we do not mean the individual members of which, at any given time, it may happen to be composed. If we did, we could form no positive conclusions respecting it, nor describe it as one

thing or the other, except approximately, and then we should not define the Church, but merely describe its present condition.

Neither, again, is it a mere abstract or generalized notion, which we have in view. When we speak of the Churches of Rome, of England, or of Geneva, we refer to something actually subsisting from age to age, upon the earth, and not merely in our minds:—a bodily subsistence, acting and suffering, flourishing or decaying, as the case may be. Every one capable of analyzing his own thoughts, will assent to these evident propositions.

What we do mean is, perhaps, more easily understood than defined. Throughout these Sermons I have employed the term *idea*, in a technical and proper sense, to denote that which is neither an abstract notion, nor a particular phenomenon, but a living reality, recognised in and by the mind itself, through its own forms, but having, nevertheless, an outward and positive existence. It would be my wish, if I had the power, to disencumber a subject of such deep concernment, of all peculiar phraseology. It were far better if precision could be obtained without the strangeness that repels, or the circumlocution that wearies the ordinary reader. But precision is the one thing needful; and therefore I say, that in discussing the catholicity of the English Church, as compared with other ecclesiastical, or simply religious bodies, we have been speaking of an *idea*¹, intending nothing else than what is involved in the most ordinary forms of speech; nothing of which a thoughtful man is not more or less distinctly conscious, in his reflections, however he may be accustomed to word them².

¹ "Ἦν εἴτε γένος, εἴτε ἰδέαν, εἴτε ἐννόημα, εἰθ' ὅτι ποτε χρὴ καλεῖν, οἱ ζητητικοὶ τῶν κυρίων ὀνομάτων εἴσονται.—*Phil. Jud. Deter. Potior.* p. 207. Ed. Mangey.

² "This will sound like a paradox or a sneer to those with whom

This idea—(that which *every* man really means, when he speaks of a Church, or, indeed, of any other body politic)—consists in its positive tendencies, and is recog-

an idea is but another word for a *fancy*—a something unreal; but not to those who in the ideas contemplate the most real of all realities, and of all operative powers the most actual^a." The reference in this passage is to the British Constitution, which is shown both to *be*, and to *exist as* an idea. An equally pregnant illustration, and more to the present purpose, is suggested by the phrase, "popular rights," so commonly and so mischievously used from the breaking out of the French revolution to the present day.

What is the people? Take it as the collective humanity of the nation, the men, *as men*, of which the nation is composed, (*populus*, *plebsque*, both in one, without reference to the distinction of each,) and it is impossible to speak too highly of its right, its power, its sovereignty: *Vox populi, vox Dei!* Thus defined the people is indeed the entire body of the commonwealth, whose interests are paramount, and the many, only as contrasted with an usurping few. It is the sum total of the elements which constitute the body politic, and whatever improves or exalts their condition, whatever tends to humanize, and in this way to bring them forward, whatever, in a word, will make them wiser, happier, or better, may be universally claimed as a right, because it should be universally promoted as a duty. As men, they

must be universally and personally represented in the state, and whatever is less than this is a wrong to human nature, or at least an imperfection, to be progressively remedied, as soon as it is extensively felt. But what are the exponents of this collective humanity? How are we to ascertain its suffrage? It is registered in their religion, laws, institutions, history, as well as in their actual habits and manners, their business and amusements, their fixed opinions and established literature. And if it be asked, how this is to be acted upon practically; I answer, Providence has long ago settled the question in its main features, and continues to work out the most important results by means far out of our immediate control. What discretion is left us in particular cases, will be determined to good, by simply considering the rights of the people, (their absolute rights, I mean,) as coincident with their real interests, determining these by the golden rule, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as *thyself*." Thus far of the people, considered as an idea, the true correlative of the nation.

Now, identify the people with the population,—the inhabitants of a given district, at a given time,—a total of individuals, as individuals, determined by mere numeration. Consider these as possessed of inherent rights; that all power and authority emanates from these, and that their pleasure must be taken as the ultimate standard

^a COLERIDGE'S *Church and State*, p. 17, note, third edition.

nised in its actual results. Confessions, articles, catechisms, liturgies, ritual observances, sacred functions, theological writings, schools and universities, all assist in

of government. How is this to be ascertained? By the simplest method imaginable,—by the vote of the majority. But this is a mere delusion, a chimera to which, in practice, it must ever be impossible even to approximate. Yet, suppose it a practicable course, and pass over the injustice, or at least the hard dealing suffered by the minority, no matter how numerous, or how composed. What is the result? What have you learnt? The lessons of experience, the counsels of wisdom, the maxims of expediency, the dictates of conscience, or the obligations of religion? None of these. You have learnt nothing but the momentary will of a number of individuals which you are pleased to call the people. Having abstracted every particular form under which the interests of the social man are represented,—birth, station, education, wealth, office, character, all thrown out of the account, all the foci of humanizing influence which providence has created, and time bequeathed, whether devised by wisdom, approved by experience, favoured by virtue, or sanctioned by religion,—and having thus alienated all that differences man from a mere animal, we shall arrive at the unit, or elementary particle, of which the people, *thus* regarded, is composed. Multiply this, with the blind and sensual impulse of which alone it is capable, (for *will* is a human attribute, common to man, with devils indeed as well as angels, but still a

spiritual power,) multiply it by thousands or by millions, and we have the theory of a popular government—the substance of the sovereign people!

Throw a hair into the stagnant pool, and in a few days countless myriads of animalculæ cluster around it, in closest contiguity, each an exact counterpart of the other, making it, apparently, a living whole^a. Without head or heart, without eyesight or hearing, without purpose or proper functions, but strangely sentient, and in restless agitation, in this singular production with its separable atoms, its false unity, its unquiet motion and animal sensibility, (each constituent particle endowed with an individual life, which it *loses* in combination, the throb which gives a common movement

^a This curious animal, or animalcular assemblage, which I have often seen, when a boy, in the rills and plashy lanes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, (though I by no means vouch for the theory of its formation here given,) is sufficiently pictured in the popular notice which represents it as a vivified horse-hair. It has an undulatory motion, like that of a serpent, but, as far as I remember, without progression. I am ignorant of its name, but it doubtless belongs to the class of aggregate tunicaries, of which so interesting an account is given, KIRBY's *Bridgewater Treatise*, chap. viii. It is more like the *Anchinia* of Professor Eschenhold, in which the animalculæ are attached, by a pedicle, to a common body. But the confederate *salpe*, or *pyrusome*, will equally justify the illustration which I have made use of in the text. The latter is described by Lamarck as a "mass filled with animals," having the appearance of "a single polype."

revealing that living power, of which they are the visible products: and to these must be added the character of the nation at large, its history and present condition, its institutions and laws, in so far as these have been modified by the faith and worship of the people. And the same reasoning holds good of particular religious bodies. Now, of the idea thus seen in its manifest operations, we can pronounce positively whether it be scriptural or unscriptural,—a Church of Christ, or of anti-Christ. It is defined by its organical exponents, and we may know whether it is fraught with life or with death. But how far a given individual is involved in these consequences, either for good or evil, can in no case be more than probably guessed'. It depends on the degree in which

to the whole being propagated by mere contagion,) we have an image of the people, as it must appear to those who reject all reference to the *idea*, and insist upon the mere phenomenon.

Conceive a monster similarly constructed, but of hideous dimensions, and enormous force, generated by disease, and nourished by unhealthy humours, destroying, by intestine pangs, the body in which it is bred, the product of morbid decay, perhaps the punishment of vicious excesses,—and we have a type of a democracy, such as it is recommended to “the masses” by physiocratic theorists, and their numerous practical representatives;—the absolution of animal instinct, directed, (in the absence of all controlling principle,) by numerical suffrage, and determined by physical force.

Thanks be to God, if the first definition lead to views of unattainable perfection, a state in which all the real interests of man

should be fostered, and every individual man, virtually and really represented, the latter can never be wholly realized. The instincts of humanity can never be wholly smothered, even in a crowd. A thousand checks must continually operate. In every thing, except the brute impulses of animal passion, a counter-influence must be experienced: and if every other obstacle be overborne, the successful Demagogue himself always presents an effectual barrier to the accomplishment of his own schemes.

¹ “It is far otherwise with respect to matters of faith and inward conviction: and with respect to *these*, I say, tolerate no belief, that you judge false and of an injurious tendency, and arraign no believer. The man is more and other than his belief: and God only knows, how small or how large a part of him the belief in question may be, for good or for evil. Resist every false doctrine: and call no man heretic. The false doctrine does not necessarily

he has really identified himself with the principles which he professes; we must know what counteracting influences, if any, are at work within him, or upon him; and, above all, what allowance will be made by the All-merciful, not merely for inevitable ignorance, and other invincible obstacles, but for peculiar difficulties and temptations, with the defects and errors to which they give rise. Thus, though we can readily point out, on Scriptural grounds, the proper effect of any given exhibition of Christian belief upon the souls of men, to judge of any man's individual salvation otherwise than hypothetically, is equally unreasonable, presumptuous, and uncharitable.

To speak of a particular case. The Church of Rome, the mighty queen still throned in majesty upon the seven hills,—still holding vast domains in subjection,—I cannot doubt that the actual working of this vast power is against Christ, and not for Him: that it has long ceased to hold the Head; that its life and potency are in their nature worldly, and its peculiar spirit an educt of the Evil one. By its definition, therefore, it is—not indeed *the* Church of anti-Christ, whose dominion acknowledges no such limits—but belonging to it¹. Do I then say that

make the man a heretic: but an evil heart can make any doctrine heretical.”—*Aids to Reflection*, p. 154, in the note, fourth edition. It is surely unnecessary to add in explanation, that though the man is more and other than his belief, yet that the latter is an influential principle, of so subtle a quality, that we cannot tell how small a quantity may be sufficient to infect his moral nature throughout. The passage is intended to restrain rash judgment, but not to make light of misbelief.

¹ Τί οὖν ἄτοπον, δύο (ἓν οὕτως ὀνομάσω) ἀκρότητας, τήν μὲν τοῦ καλοῦ, τήν δὲ τοῦ ἐναντίου, ἐν ἀνθρώποις γίγνεσθαι; ὥστε τήν μὲν τοῦ καλοῦ ἀκρότητα εἶναι ἐν τῷ κατὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν νοουμένῳ ἀνθρώπῳ, ἀφ' οὗ ἡ τοσαύτη ἐρρέυσσε τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπιστροφή, καὶ θεραπεία καὶ βελτίωσις· τήν δὲ τοῦ ἐναντίου ἐν τῷ κατὰ τὸν ὀνομαζόμενον Ἀντίχριστον. πάντα δὲ τῇ ἐαυτοῦ προγνώσει ἐκπεριλαβὼν ὁ Θεὸς, καὶ ἰδὼν τὰ περὶ ἀμφοτέρων τούτων, ἐβουλήθη

this ancient polity, with all its dependencies, has entirely lost “the faith which was once delivered to the saints?” God forbid! Far, very far from it. Along with its *distinguishing* characteristics, it retains a proportion, a large proportion of common Christianity, not *as* the Church of Rome, but as a portion of Christendom at large. And these elements cannot but tend to neutralize each other, in degrees varying in every particular instance, according as each has been received. That multitudes of men, born and reared in the Papacy, have, in every age, lived and died in the true faith, contemplated as a saving principle, however erroneous the forms under which they have received it, proves nothing in favour of the malignant influence, which, by the blessing of God, they have effectually, if not nominally resisted. The seed of the Word may have taken root in their hearts; the intermingled tares have rested in their understanding. The converse of this position is admitted by all. None deny that the forms of truth may be admitted by the understanding, and yet the truth itself find no entrance to the heart. Why deny the *hopes* of man, (yearning for his brother’s good,) the benefit of a principle, which tells so potently upon his fears? How can the same argument, which irresistibly condemns, be utterly without power to save? However dark the age, or corrupt the Church, the truths of the Gospel, though involved in much error, have been *implicitly* presented to the faith of mankind; and who shall say by how many they have been savingly

περὶ τούτων γνωρίσαι διὰ τῶν
προφητῶν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἵνα
οἱ συνιέντες τῶν λόγων αὐτῶν
οἰκειωθῶσι μὲν τῷ κρείττονι,
φυλάσσονται δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐναν-
τίου. ἐχρῆν δὲ τὸν μὲν ἕτερον
τῶν ἀκρῶν, καὶ βέλτιστον, υἷον

ἀναγορεύεσθαι τοῦ Θεοῦ, διὰ
τὴν ὑπεροχὴν τὸν δὲ τούτῳ
κατὰ διάμετρον ἐναντίον, υἷον
τοῦ πονηροῦ δαίμονος, καὶ
Σατανᾶ, καὶ διαβόλου.—Orig.
contra Celsum. Lib. vi. p. 307.

received? I am not alluding to a Berengarius, or a Huss, a Grostete, or a Wicliff,—men, enabled by the particular leading of providence, (manifested in the circumstances of their intellectual conformation, education, and social position,) to think out, and to express, the suggestions of an enlightened spirit: but humble men of God, not fitted or intended to occupy so high and conspicuous a pre-eminence;—simple minded men, acquiescent in the teaching under which they were placed, but yet divinely enabled (not intellectually, but by a moral instinct) to separate the honey from the gall, and assimilate the nourishing portion only of the food with which they were provided:—yes, eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ indeed, and celebrating a spiritual Eucharist, in a day of lies, and a land of idols!

Again, an important difference exists between the Church of Rome, before the reformation, when it embraced all the christianity of the western world, and the same Church afterwards, when all its objectionable doctrines and practices were not simply held and pursued, but *asserted*, in emphatic contradiction to the opposite truths. The same forms of speech, the same modes of worship, acquire a different meaning, or, at least, a new force after they have been defined by controversy¹: and thus the rites, to which subsequent decisions have affixed an interpretation, emphatically popish, may have formerly been accepted by spiritual minded persons, in the very same sense which was afterwards *secured* by the reformers. I say that there is a distinction, and on a general view, a widely operating distinction,—a marked and important

¹ Hence the absurdity of forcing every loose expression used by the early fathers, in support or con- demnation of opinions, which had not yet become the subject of discussion.

difference between the Papacy before and after the Council of Trent. Yet, even in the latter and less favourable case, how many millions of men have been born within its pale, to whom no other form of belief has been presented, or not persuasively, not with any evidence which they were capable of appreciating; and of these shall we not see it to be a probable hope, amounting to a moral presumption, that many have received their faith and performed their service, as christianity, and not as popery¹?

On the other hand, turning to the self-constituted associations, by which the ministry of the word and sacraments is at present assumed in various parts of the world, it is impossible for those who define a Church to be an integral part of the catholic polity, actually founded by the apostles, to be a visible witness, depository, and guardian of all that was revealed to man by Jesus Christ,—it is impossible, I say, with these views, to regard institutions, having no external sanction, and no internal principle of permanence, as Churches at all, in a strict sense, certainly not as true Churches. For although they differ from each other in various respects and degrees,

¹ These distinctions appear to have been recognised by Archbishop Whitgift, in his famous judgment between Hooker and Travers: though his meaning is expressed with extreme caution, and certainly with no leaning towards the papal cause. Thus he distinguishes between “Papists and our Fathers”—between “those living and dying Papists,” and those “living in popish superstitions”—and admits a reasonable hope that the latter may have been saved “by the mercy of God,” their fault being

diminished and extenuated by their ignorance. And true it is, that “ignorance could not excuse the fault to make it no fault:” because such ignorance, so absolutely disconnected from moral influences, exists only in theory. On the other hand, he denies that Papists, *as* Papists, hold the foundation of faith. For this is the only way of understanding the second answer by which it can be made consistent with the first, or indeed orthodox^a.

^a See HOOKER’S *Works*, Vol. i. p. 81. Keble’s Edition.

some exhibiting a much nearer approach to the ecclesiastical character than others, yet none of them display *all* the features, or perform *all* the functions of the great pentecostal congregation, perpetuated from apostolic times, as by other means, so especially by the visible succession of its pastorate. This last condition, at the very least, is wanting to substantiate their claims. Thus, if it should be granted, for the sake of argument, that some one of these multiform bodies were exactly configured after the Scriptural model, (a concession fatal to the pretensions of all the rest,) yet its actual existence would supply no testimony co-ordinate with that of Scripture, neither an inclining presumption, nor a determining confirmation, to establish the fact. Whereas, the bare existence of a regularly descended apostolic Church is a presumption in its favour, which the test of Scripture converts into proof positive. And, again, in the former case, nothing less than a literal agreement of the most formal kind, can be received as evidence; which, for the most part, it is impossible to produce, and mischievous, not to say ridiculous, to attempt¹. Whereas, in the latter case, nothing more is necessary, or fitting, than a *virtual* correspondence, modified by circumstances, and compatible with the lawful exercise of Christian liberty. The *deposit* is seen to be the same, because it is the same, and not merely *like* it. The grounds of this position, however, have been already discussed. At present, I am only concerned to consider it in its bearing upon individual salvation. Supposing the bodies in question not to be true Churches, what is the condition of their members?

¹ Hence the extravagancies of the Irvingites, and other sects, who, from time to time, have endeavoured to *make themselves apos-* | tolic, and identify themselves with the Church of Scripture, by mimicking its appearance.

And here, as above indicated, the same reasoning holds good which I have applied to the Church of Rome. If we contemplate the several religious connexions here spoken of, each *in itself*, that is, in the idea which it embodies, they must be regarded as partaking universally in an heretical and schismatic character¹, but in very different degrees; for while some have fallen beneath, or strayed beside the orthodox standard, into the lowest depth, or furthest excesses of infidel or fanatical error,—others have retained, thus far, with little variation, the dogmatic truths of religion, as they have received them, though daily experience proves into what unsafe keeping they have passed. And, again, while some have severed themselves with violence from the visible Church, and maintain themselves in active hostility towards it, in other cases, the act of separation is hardly complete, and an equivocal but not unfriendly relation preserved. Even here there is much serious and increasing irregularity to regret. And sectarian attitude is daily more and more distinctly assumed: but the evil has not ripened into

¹ They may be characterized as irregular after-growths, bearing, it may be, some show of fruit and blossom, but entirely dependent for support and nourishment on the ancient trunk out of which they have sprung:—sprung, not as branches which return and circulate the sap which they have received, but as distinct and separate plants,—parasites, that shade and exhaust the parent tree to which they owe their existence, and in whose life their own is ultimately involved. This metaphor might be still further pursued. The first appearance of these spurious shoots indicates a partial decay, which their subsequent growth extends and perpetuates:—nay, for a while the health and vigour of the younger shoots may seem to increase in an inverse ratio to that of the parent stem. But this can only proceed to a certain point. Eventually the usurping sucker must sympathize with the weakness which it has aggravated, and fatally experience the diminution of that vitality on which it had preyed so long. It is unnecessary to trace this tendency to its final result; which, we surely trust, in the good providence of God, will in every case, be happily prevented.

actual schism. These distinctions may, however, be set aside for the moment: for of none of these confederacies can it be affirmed that it guarantees the full enjoyment of Church privileges. If to communicate outwardly with the company of believers organized, as a visible society, by the apostles, and linked together by bands of love, both sensibly and mystically, according to the will and promise of Christ; time not interrupting, space not intercepting the conjunction; if this be any *pledge* of that spiritual communion which is in its nature invisible; if, through faith, it affords a conditional *assurance* of unseen blessings, these benefits must be suspended when the integrity of this heavenly dispensation is impaired.

As, therefore, speaking generally, I have concluded that the effects of the Romish system upon its votaries cannot but be most pernicious,—(nay, though I should not scruple to term it, with our forefathers, “a soul-destroying heresy,”)—yet I have denied that what is said of the system itself, must necessarily be predicated of its individual members, (as if, because the Church is idolatrous, its communicants must, man by man, be idolaters,)—so, with regard to the irregular protestant sects, speaking generally, I cannot but regard the influence which they exercise on the souls of men (not as protestant, but as sectarian bodies) to be the reverse of good. Yet this tendency must, in itself, be susceptible of degrees, even from the extreme of malignancy, to a quality *comparatively* mild and harmless. The interval is indeed wide between those who acknowledge no Redeemer, and those who entertain imperfect views of His outward dispensation; and of these latter, between those who, in effect, deny the existence of christianity, as an outward fact, accepting it as a heavenly doctrine involved in fable, and those

whose errors are confined to the mode of its propagation; and again, of these last, between the comparatively regular and primitive forms of independency or presbyterianism—and the wilful, wanton distractions, without rule, or specific character, or bond of union, even the most loose and transient, to which the elder dissenting societies have afforded a precedent only too respectable. But if there be an essential difference between these several associations, it must affect the general condition of those who seek in each the salvation of their souls. All cannot be encouraged by an equal hope, or involved in a like despair. Yet of none of these can it be asserted, in conformity with orthodox principles, that it is a true Church; and of none can we dare to say, that the *saving* truths of the Gospel cannot, “*by the mercy of God,*” be virtually received by those within its pale.

Each has its own characteristic tendency, and this, inasmuch as it differs from the catholic standard, in so far as it is merely sectarian, is simply evil. But that which distinguishes each is not the whole,—perhaps it is the smallest part,—of itself. Hence, when we speak of individuals, we cannot doubt that though, as members of a sectarian community, they are all in this respect more or less unfavourably situated, yet that this goes, perhaps, but a little way towards determining their actual or eventual state. This depends, after all, as explained above, on considerations of a personal nature, known to God alone.

While, however, we open the door thus far to charitable hope, let it not be deemed a matter of slight importance, in what Christian community any man is placed. Far from it. The connexion between the head and the heart—between religious belief, as presented to the understanding, and as received into the moral being—is

too close and influential, not to make even the minutest differences of speculative opinion, on so high and important a question, a fit subject for most serious and earnest discussion. Nay, in the mere circumstance that these self-originating sects have cut themselves off outwardly and apparently, from the great permanent body of believers, visibly united upon earth, as well by sacramental initiation and communion, as by a fixed, continuous, ministerial order, there is cause of deep regret, and anxious solicitude. Not as if some *charm* were broken by this disseverment; a notion studiously insinuated by the opponents of this doctrine, and unwarily countenanced by some of its supporters. I speak of a positive, appreciable loss, sustained by the separatist, depending indeed on the great spiritual mystery embodied in the visible Church, but plainly cognizable in its effects; and in this way proving the oppugnancy of such separation to the will and command of Christ. But here a new subject opens upon me,—the true nature of ecclesiastical succession and unity;—the consideration of which must be postponed to another occasion.

SERMON XVII.
ON THE SACRAMENTS.

—
PART V. HOLY COMMUNION.—SECTION II. THE REASONABLE SERVICE.
—

ROMANS xii. 1.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

IN the office of the holy communion, as administered in the English Church, after we have partaken of the consecrated elements, and repeated the Lord's prayer, we give utterance to our devotion in the following terms: "O Lord, and heavenly Father, we thy humble servants entirely desire thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept *this our sacrifice* of praise and thanksgiving." A similar turn of expression, adapted from the language of St. Paul, in the remarkable passage which stands at the head of this discourse, recurs in the next sentence. "And *here*, we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls, and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively *sacrifice* unto thee." And that the sentiment may be still further expanded and enforced, it is added, "And although we be unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto thee any *sacrifice*, yet we beseech thee to accept this our bounden duty and service." Thus in this short composition, the word "sacrifice," occurs three times in immediate connexion with the "holy mystery" of the Eucharist. We call on God to accept *this* our sacrifice: we

offer and present it *here*—on this occasion: words that intimate, at the very least, an express celebration, and a more than ordinary solemnity. Lastly, we confess ourselves unworthy, not simply to present our prayers or praises to the Author of all goodness, but to offer any *sacrifice*.

The slightest acquaintance with the history of this august and beautiful service, prior to the reformation, will be sufficient to convince us that the phraseology here adopted is not accidental. It was to correct a widespread and deep-seated error on the subject of sacramental communion, that the ancient formulary was revised; and if the great divines, by whom this work was so ably accomplished, had not studiously sought out those passages of Scripture, which give to Christian devotion the name and character of a spiritual sacrifice, they would as studiously have avoided them. It is to no purpose to allege that the words above cited are allusive, and metaphorical. It is evident that they were intended to have a *special* propriety, and the question is, in what this propriety consists.

By some it may be contended, that in giving this turn to a part of the service, the object was to deal gently with a popular prejudice, which the reformers hoped eventually to remove, by a temporary and apparent concession. Or, these and the like expressions were inserted, (at a time, when the evils of religious separation were not more bitterly felt than freely acknowledged,) to make the terms of Church communion as little exclusive as possible. These charitable motives may indeed have decided some minor regulations. But to speak with intentional ambiguity on so important a matter, the cardinal point of that controversy which had shaken to its foundations the whole fabric of society;—to retain the language, while

they withdrew the substance of an ancient superstition, as if to beguile the people out of their early and habitual faith—this is an equivocation which no expediency could excuse, and which cannot be imputed to those holy confessors, without manifest improbability and gross injustice.

I believe, however, that the beautiful prayer under consideration, expresses the sense of the English Church on this critical question, simply, and forcibly, without disguise or reserve. Whether as addressed to Romanist or to Protestant prepossessions, it speaks, I think, unequivocally to this effect. The holy Eucharist is a sacrifice. In this, the Church of our fathers, making the same confession from age to age, has neither added to, nor changed “the faith which was once delivered to the saints.” But what sacrifice? The bodily substance of Jesus Christ, introduced by priestly intervention, under the appearance of bread and wine? A host, or victim, first made, and then offered by the hands of man? God forbid! “Christ, by the one oblation of Himself, once offered, has made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world:” and to dream of any other sacrifice, any other atonement, any other mediation, is blasphemy. In the Lord’s supper, this sacrifice is, by His express command, solemnly commemorated. Not barely recorded, not recollected merely, but trustfully and affectionately remembered. How then can *this* be called *our* sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving? Because in this communion, we “offer and present *ourselves*, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice,” acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ, all, unworthy as we are, who exercise this precious privilege. Fear not therefore to esteem the Lord’s great festival a sacrifice. The living truth, the divine and heavenly reality, the true, the open,

the perpetual confession of Christ's universal Church, is still acknowledged in our Holy Communion, though the idolatrous mass be abolished. There is a sacrifice in this our high solemnity, specially celebrated, enacted, and set forth,—a *spiritual* sacrifice, which is indeed our *reasonable service*¹.

Such I believe to be the general intention of this remarkable prayer; to define, namely, the sense in which the eucharist may and must be regarded as a sacrifice, by associating it with that oblation of our own bodies, which St. Paul declares to be our reasonable service. And in this the compilers of our Liturgy did no more than ratify and continue the universal tradition of the Church from the most early times: I mean that they added nothing new. They did no more than re-state the common doctrine, cleared from much that was ambiguous, and not a little that was positively false. But this is not disputed. No one imagines that the office of the Holy Communion, as it stands at present, goes beyond ecclesiastical precedent in any particular. The only question raised by Protestants, as between themselves², is whether it has been fully brought back to the simplicity of Gospel truth. It must be my business, therefore, to examine the connexion, which I have shown to be indicated in the Communion Service, and which I believe to exist between the cele-

¹ Vide ATHAN. *expos.* in Psal. xlix. “Θυσία αἰνέσεως δοξάσει με” ἐπαναλαμβάνει τὰ εἰρημένα, τὴν λογικὴν ἐπιτελεῖν λατρείαν παρακελευόμενος· μετὰ τὴν πολλὴν κατηγορίαν τὸ φάρμακον τῆς ἁμαρτίας ἔδειξεν, τῶν μυστηρίων δηλαδὴ τὴν ἀπόλαυσιν· ἐκείνη γὰρ ἀληθῶς θυσία αἰνέσεως τὸν Θεὸν δοξά-

ζουσα· ἐπειδὴ μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων αἰνοῦντες τότε καὶ μετὰ τῆς κτίσεως ἰστάμεθα “καὶ ἐκεῖ ὁδὸς ἦν δείξω αὐτῷ τὸ σωτήριόν μου.” ἐν τῇ θυσίᾳ, φησὶ, τῆς αἰνέσεως ὁδὸς ἐστὶ τῆς παρὰ Θεῷ σωτηρίας. Vol. I. p. 865, c. Ed. Bened. Patav.

² See Note to Sermon XVI.

bration of the eucharist and that living sacrifice, which is, indeed, our reasonable service, by a reference to Scriptural principles, testing my conclusions, as I have hitherto done, by the written Word of God.

Now that such a complete surrender of ourselves to the service and disposal of Almighty God, together with the denial and crucifixion of our sinful appetites and passions, is in itself our bounden duty, will be denied by none. All will admit the necessity of a sacrifice, morally and practically interpreted, as the condition and mean of our salvation, not merely as consummated once for all, by the divine Priest-victim¹ on Mount Calvary, but as truly enacted through grace by every true believer in his own person. What I have to show,—what, if I may be permitted to unveil so profound a truth, and my feeble words do not betray the charge with which they are intrusted, I hope to prove,—is the essential connexion that subsists between the two: that the continual self-sacrifice by which the spiritually-minded Christian struggles to free himself from the body of this death, is but a renewed manifestation of the all-sufficient atonement made by the Son of man arising out of it, as the effect from its cause. Secondly, that the visible eucharist is a true commemorative symbol and effectual representation of this sacrifice, in such sort, that the “old man” is hereby spiritually “crucified,”—a new and better nature actually presented to the throne of grace,—and thus, “by the merits and death of Jesus Christ, and through faith in His blood,” “remission of sins, and all other benefits

¹ Quomodo nos amasti pro quibus Ille, *non rapinam arbitratus esse æqualis tibi, factus est subditus usque ad mortem concis,*—ideo victor quia victima; pro nobis tibi sacerdos et sacrificium, et ideo sacerdos quia sacrificium. AUG. *Conf.* x. 69.
pro nobis tibi victor et victima, et

of His passion¹," individually appropriated and enjoyed. Such I believe to be the order of thought in which this question is to be investigated. But, to prevent prolixity, as well as to escape from speculations, which may, perhaps, be deemed abstruse, intangible, and bewildering, I shall consider the first of these positions in and through the second, taking the Lord's Supper, as celebrated by the apostles, to be itself a sufficient exponent of all the doctrines which it involves. I shall thus have examined this holy sacrament in its two principal bearings,—twin-streams from the same sacred source,—first, as it respects the reception of the Saviour's body; secondly, as it points *directly* to His cross. In the former point of view, the *end* is principally contemplated as produced by the power of God. It is the blessed communion of the soul with Christ,—the gift from heaven actually enjoyed. In the latter, the outward and inward *means* appear prominent: we are reminded of the part assigned to ourselves,—the positive devotion implied in the *process*. Both must be, in fact, united,—grace accepted, and love experienced, with duty tendered and service performed,—all inseparably blended in one solemn act of faith².

¹ Communion Service.

² In the New Testament the mystery of the eucharist is developed gradually. It is revealed, first, as a participation in the Saviour's body given for the life of the world, and points to the fact of His incarnation; it is then engrafted, so to speak, upon the paschal supper, and takes a special reference to His crucifixion. "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's *death* till He come:" hence, the care taken by the early Church to

give the elements an emblematic reference to the body and blood of the Saviour's fleshly nature, not merely as *broken* for the purpose of distribution, "Take and eat this," "Drink ye all of this," but more particularly as *broken on the cross*,—pierced and bleeding in the dread atonement. The last of these explanations is, however, as I hope to show, included in the former, which it develops and confirms. The Saviour's body was indeed, so broken *on the cross* that all through faith might partake of

Now that the institution of the Lord's Supper was intended to represent specifically, "the sacrifice of the death of Christ" will be so generally conceded, that it would be a waste of words to go into any lengthened discussion on this point. It is rather necessary to define and restrict the sense in which this position is to be maintained. When the Lord Jesus, the same night that He was betrayed, said to His disciples, "This is my body which is given for you," we cannot doubt that He gave utterance to the same sublime doctrine which He had already taught them. "The bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world¹." On the general import of these words, (as far as it may be lawful to investigate so high a mystery,) I have already enlarged²; suffice it to observe in this place, that when, to accomplish this all-gracious purpose, the Son of man took our nature upon Him, "He was made a little lower than

the precious gift, eating that flesh and drinking that blood which was given for the life of the world.

In the English Liturgy, these views are beautifully harmonized throughout. But, though combined, they are not undistinguished. This is evident from the post-communion, in which there are two prayers, either of which may be used at the discretion of the minister. It is the first of these to which I have referred in the opening of this Sermon, as giving the opinion of the Reformers on the eucharistic sacrifice. It contains the practical exposition furnished by St. Paul. The second turns expressly upon the mystical incorporation of the Church through spiritual commu-

nion. This is the absolute primary truth, declared by the Saviour Himself, as reported by St. John, out of which the whole doctrine of the sacrament, in all its phases and applications, is educed. The latter of these prayers is less frequently read than the former, perhaps as being thought less intelligible. But, though profound, it is not obscure. If seasonably explained, it would be understood by any simple-minded worshipper familiar with the Church Catechism, and accustomed to Church services. It is an inexpressibly sublime and affecting composition.

¹ Communion Service.

² John vi. 51.

³ Sermon XVI.

the angels," particularly, "*for the suffering of death*¹." Not as if the human *life* of the Saviour did not share with its mortal termination, in effecting a reconciliation between God and man: not as if all the acts and sufferings of the Incarnate Word had not contributed to this blessed result; "for in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren²:" "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin³." But liability to death, being not merely an accident of the nature thus assumed, but its specific character, in this distinguishing mark of our fallen race, every other property of the manhood is, as it were, summed up and represented. Thus, to "become flesh," while it lay under the curse, was, in the event to die, to suffer *death* for every man. The awful gift of the Saviour's flesh, by which the life of the world

¹ Heb. ii. 9. I am tempted to transcribe the fine passage of St. Athanasius which follows, as strikingly illustrative of the sacramental doctrine which I have attempted to set forth. The scholastic reader, who may not have the works of this eminent Father, will thank me for not confining myself to a simple reference.

Συνιδὼν γὰρ ὁ λόγος, ὅτι ἄλλως οὐκ ἂν λυθείη τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἡ φθορά, εἰ μὴ διὰ τοῦ πάντως ἀποθανεῖν οὐκοῖόν τε δὲ ἦν τὸν λόγον ἀποθανεῖν ἀθάνατον ὄντα καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς υἱόν· τούτου ἕνεκεν τὸ δυνάμενον ἀποθανεῖν ἐαυτῷ λαμβάνει σῶμα, ἵνα τοῦτο τοῦ ἐπὶ πάντων λόγου μεταλαβὼν, ἀντὶ πάντων ἱκανὸν γένηται τῷ θανάτῳ, καὶ διὰ τὸν ἐνοικήσαντα λόγον, ἄφθαρτον διαμείνη, καὶ λοιπὸν ἀπὸ πάντων ἡ φθορά παύσῃται τῇ τῆς ἀναστάσεως χάριτι· ὅθεν ὡς

ἱερεῖον καὶ θύμα παντὸς ἐλευθερον σπύλου, ὃ αὐτὸς ἐαυτῷ ἔλαβε σῶμα, προσάγων εἰς θάνατον, ἀπὸ πάντων εὐθύς τῶν ὁμοίων ἠφάνιζε τὸν θάνατον τῇ προσφορᾷ τοῦ καταλλήλου. ὑπὲρ πάντας γὰρ ὧν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰκότως τὸν ἐαυτοῦ ναὸν καὶ τὸ σωματικὸν ὄργανον προσάγων ἀντίψυχον ὑπὲρ πάντων, ἐπλήρου τὸ ὀφειλόμενον ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ· καὶ οὕτως συνὼν διὰ τοῦ ὁμοίου τοῖς πᾶσιν ὁ ἄφθαρτος τοῦ θεοῦ υἱός, εἰκότως τοὺς πάντας ἐνέδυσεν ἀφθαρσίαν ἐν τῇ περὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἐπαγγελίᾳ. καὶ αὕτη γὰρ ἡ ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ φθορά κατὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων οὐκέτι χώραν ἔχει διὰ τὸν ἐνοικήσαντα λόγον ἐν τούτοις διὰ τοῦ ἐνὸς σώματος.—S. ATHAN. *de Incarn. Verbi Dei*. Vol. i. p. 43. Ed. Bened. Patav.

² Heb. ii. 17.

³ Heb. iv. 15.

is rescued from “the last enemy” and sustained for a blessed immortality, is, indeed, co-extensive with the divine mystery of His incarnation; yet may His final passion be taken as a symbol of the whole, being, indeed, that *part* in which all the rest is implied. For so the name of *mortal* passes as synonymous with that of *man*, so completely is our dying humanity identified with that doom to which it is naturally subject.

While then we take our Saviour’s words, as recorded by St. John, in all the extent which they appear to occupy, not presuming to tie down the divine and mystical communion there spoken of to one particular mode, in accordance with one specific character, we are yet prepared for the somewhat closer exposition which it eventually received. And when we find the same words, (in substance certainly, and very nearly in terms,) repeated at the Paschal supper, in conjunction with an expressive sign, appropriated to this use by the Lord Himself; when we consider that this sign was suggested by the circumstances under which it was given, and evidently reflects the meaning of the ancient ordinance which it was intended to supplant, drawing to itself, if I may so speak, the spiritual import of a temporary and imperfect economy, thus translated, into a higher and more heavenly sphere¹; (an economy dating from the fall of man, when

¹ Σὰρξ οὖν ἐγένετο· καὶ γενόμενος σὰρξ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, οὐκ ἔξω γενομενος ἡμῶν· σκηνώσας δὲ καὶ γενόμενος ἐν ἡμῖν οὐκ ἔμεινεν ἐπὶ τῆς πρώτης μορφῆς· ἀλλ’, ἀναβιβάσας ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ τὸ λογικὸν ὑψηλὸν ὄρος, ἔδειξεν ἡμῖν τὴν ἑνδοξὴν μορφήν ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ τὴν λαμπρότητα τῶν ἐνδυμάτων αὐτοῦ·

καὶ οὐκ ἑαυτοῦ γε μόνου, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ πνευματικοῦ γε νόμου, ὃς ἐστὶν ἐν δόξῃ ὁφθεὶς μετ’ Ἰησοῦ Μωσῆς. ἔδειξε δ’ ἡμῖν καὶ πᾶσαν προφητείαν, οὐδὲ μετὰ τὸ ἐνανθρωπήσαι ἀποθνήσκουσαν, ἀλλ’ ἀναλαμβανόμενὴν εἰς οὐρανόν, ἧς σύμβολον Ἡλίας ἦν. ὁ δὲ ταῦτα θεωρήσας εἶποι ἂν τὸ, Ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν

righteous Abel first “offered to the Lord the firstlings of his flock,” and if not originally of divine institution,—which is by far the most probable, as well as most pious supposition,—yet assuredly adopted by the command of God, and accommodated as a prophetical type to the very end now at length being fulfilled;) when, in a word, we look not merely to the sign itself, but to the Person by whom, and to the manner in which it was given, we shall not hesitate in determining the great mystery of which we have been speaking, to the particular form thus indicated, or dare to disjoin it from that outward exhibition, on which Jesus Christ has set the seal of a perpetual appointment. Yes, on that solemn occasion, when the last typical passover was celebrated, at that table on which a lamb without spot, taken from the flock and slain, yet with bones unbroken, was to be eaten and wholly consumed, with unleavened bread, and bitter herbs, in the attire, and with the haste of pilgrims,—sat Jesus, the lowly Nazarene, with His disciples; Himself “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world¹,” “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world²,” “Christ, our everlasting passover, *sacrificed* for us³.” A man, taken from among his brethren, “without blemish and without spot⁴,” “holy, harmless, and undefiled⁵,” now about to be slain, that He might “give us His flesh to

δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός· πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας.—ORIG. *contra Celsum*. Lib. vi. p. 323.

¹ John i. 29. Quoted in the Communion Service.

² Rev. xiii. 8.

³ There is, as Archbishop Magee has shown, an allusion to the whole work of atonement and

expiation accomplished by Jesus Christ, who is compared to the paschal lamb. The learned prelate has satisfactorily proved, that the *passover* was a *sacrifice*, as possessing all its essential characteristics.—BLOOMFIELD'S *Greek Testament*, in loc.

⁴ 1 Pet. i. 19.

⁵ Heb. vii. 26.

eat," thus imparting Himself to every spiritual communicant, to be wholly received, and truly fed upon, with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth—not without bitter herbs of penitence and self-denial. And "as they were eating," (when the ceremonial was concluded,) "He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise, also, the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you¹."

Now to limit my remarks on this all-important narrative to the question in hand, it will be freely granted, that all the bloody sacrifices of the law were now for ever concluded in the one real, substantial, and meritorious oblation of Christ, about to be achieved and perfected by His final agony, and voluntary death, in which sense we may receive His last awful words on the cross,—“It is finished.” In particular the paschal offering, the sign and pledge of the old covenant, in which all the children of promise were required to partake, as the mark of their calling and the condition of their privileges, was now completely set aside; the Lord, as it were, identifying this and every other legal sacrifice with His own person and offices, and taking upon Himself to discharge, in His own good way, their full intent and meaning². In what high sense the Saviour pronounced the sacramental

¹ Luke xxii. 19, 20.

² The paschal lamb was called by the Jews, the body of the pass-over;—so that when our Saviour, after He had assisted, (for the last time,) at this typical rite, “took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to His disciples, and

said, Take, eat, this is my body^a, He must be understood to transfer to this new symbol, whatever meaning had attached to the type hereby superseded: as if He had said, this bread, and not the lamb which you have eaten, is now the body of your passover.

^a Matt. xxvi. 26.

bread to be indeed His body, I have already attempted to determine'. But the connexion in which these solemn words occur, reveals to us more particularly the purpose with which they were used—the practical object to which they were immediately directed. We recognise not merely the presence of the Saviour's body, in the sacred elements, but to what end it is thus represented; thus, and not otherwise. It is as if He had said, "The slaughtered lamb, of which ye have partaken, whose sprinkled blood has been the memorial and sacrament of your mystic *passover*, this, with every other sacrifice hitherto offered under the law, was indeed a type of My body, representing My person, and My sufferings, the precious benefits which I am about to bestow on mankind, and the mode in which they are to be made available to your own individual salvation. This rite, with all the other observances of the Mosaic economy, have hitherto distinguished and united you, as a peculiar people, under a divine covenant, ratified by blood. But this dispensation is drawing to a close. *With desire have I desired to eat this passover before I suffer, for I say unto you, I will not eat any more thereof until it be FULFILLED in the kingdom of God.* This consecrated bread, which is indeed My body, is now its appointed symbol, and not the bleeding victim by which it has hitherto been foreshadowed. *THIS do in remembrance of me.* Let the typical ceremony by which My advent and offices have been hitherto prefigured, be henceforth discontinued.—And shed no more blood upon your altars, to sprinkle the unclean. For this wine is *the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you, and for many for the remission of sins.* This bread, and this cup, in the place of all bloody offerings, shall henceforth

be to the faithful, the true communion of my body and blood, which shall be verily and indeed received by you, and become, through faith, the means by which ye, being many, shall be made one.”

Let me now state the progress of the argument. I have shown, first, that by the incarnation of our blessed Redeemer, that body in which the eternal Word was pleased to shroud Himself, was, and is communicated to His universal Church, in such wise, as to be received entire by every separate believer. Secondly, that this mystery was revealed originally under the notion of food given and received; a mode of expression, in itself exceedingly suitable, and for which the minds of our Lord's hearers had been variously prepared. Thirdly, that by the institution of the Lord's supper, the Lord's body is described as bread from heaven. We are to eat His flesh and drink His blood. The symbolic representation already enounced by the Saviour, was converted into a fixed sacrament; the elements of bread and wine, adopted respectively as *emblems* of flesh and blood, constituting unitedly the *symbol* of His entire body, the nature of which is thus expressly defined: while in the sacramental administration of these elements, we discern a symbolic action representing generally, the mysterious union of the manhood, with a divine and omnipresent energy, in the person of Christ; revealed as a living truth of daily experience, which it is the peculiar office of faith to recognise, and of all religious ministrations to set forth and effectuate. But this is not all. We are further permitted to see in this gift of Himself, and therefore we may expect to see in its appointed symbol, the self-devotion and voluntary sacrifice, “the agony and bloody sweat, the cross and passion, the precious death and burial,” involved

in its accomplishment. And so we are assured by the apostle, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's *death* till he come'."

In accordance with these views, the Lord's supper is sometimes styled a commemorative sacrifice. For what are the Saviour's own words, "This do in *remembrance* of me."—Take bread and wine, with reverend solemnity, distribute, and receive it, in thankful recognition of my bodily presence, the flesh and blood of my human nature, given, in your behalf, (so we are taught by St. Paul,) "for an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour." If, however, no more is meant by the phrase than the memorial of this sacrifice, I venture to think it inconvenient and ambiguous. But what, if in the very act of commemoration, a *real* sacrifice be performed of the same nature, with that "remembered," nay, a divine and mystical continuation of the one sole all-sufficient atonement, manifested in its spiritual effect? What, if the formal eucharist, be made, according to the will of Christ, (and in the power of the Holy Ghost,) a legitimate instrument by which, through faith, as the true spiritual mean¹, this sacrifice is actually carried on in the Church. This, then, was the second point on which I proposed to speak².

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 26.

² Art. xxviii.

³ On so high a mystery it is impossible to speak without apprehension except in established formulæ, of which, in most cases, an ample legacy has been bequeathed to us from the early Church. Here, however, owing to unfortunate circumstances, the primitive modes of expression are liable to the most fearful misconstruction. Alas! the sanctuary in which this holy mys-

tery was once enshrined, was first polluted by idols, and then destroyed by Iconoclasts! It was reserved for our reformers to re-produce it, with fear and trembling, as they best might, from beneath the ruins of its "beautiful house." And nobly have they discharged their high and perilous office! Yet even now it is a task of no little difficulty and hazard to re-assert the sense of the sacramental offices, as they have come to us from their

Following out, therefore, the argument of the last sermon, I am bound to show, that the affirmative of the above questions is not merely intimated in a few scattered texts of Scripture, however impressive, but it must be interwoven with the whole tissue of revelation. It is, in the view of the case which I have undertaken to develop, a mere application of a general principle, so vitally important, so plainly *supposed* in express terms by the inspired writers, yet apparently so much overlooked, or misrepresented, that I hope to be excused if, with a full sense of my own inability to do justice to so critical a subject, I venture to state what I believe to be the fundamental truth. Not that I claim the right of private interpretation; God forbid! I merely put forth what I have received from the teaching of the universal Church in all its legitimate forms, submitting myself to correction from the same catholic and lawful authority. What then, let me ask, are we to understand by the communion of the Lord's body? (I use this Scriptural phrase, at present, to point to an idea which reveals itself in every page of the Sacred Volume. By and by, I shall have to take it in a closer and more technical signification.) Shall we define it as a participation in certain inestimable benefits derived from our Lord's incarnation? Yes, but *how* derived? Mysterially, I grant; but it is the nature of this very mystery, with the religious practice which it dictates, that is indicated in the term *Communion*. How great soever the advantages for which the disciples of

<p>hands: unfaithful and unspiritual interpretations lie in wait on either side of this controverted question, equally idolatrous, equally tending to deaden the doctrine, and obscure the truth. May the deep</p>	<p>feeling of awe, with which the exposition attempted in these Sermons is put forth, atone for its imperfections, and guard it from injurious error!</p>
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a Socrates may have held themselves indebted to their deceased master, they could not have entitled them the communication of his body; not even if they meant to say, that the benignant wisdom displayed in his life and doctrines, addressed itself with added power to their feelings, in consequence of his philosophic death. This then is to evade the peculiar meaning, with the imminent risk of substituting another, fatally opposed to it, in the vacant room. On the other hand, to interpret this communion of the Lord's *natural* body, (as this phrase is used in the English Prayer Book, where it is said to be "against the truth of Christ's natural body, to be at one time in more places than one,")—the visual form in which our Lord was seen upon earth, and with which He ascended into heaven, or the material particles of which at any given time it may have been composed,—this is a proposition so merely absurd, that it only needs to be stated, in order to be refuted'. It is, as I have already shown², the bodily nature of our blessed Lord, *His* human nature and *ours*, as informed and quickened by the indwelling Word of God³; the substance of that humanity which He assumed for our sakes, and in this way redeemed from death, making it pure, incorruptible, and glorious;—a true, a heavenly, a spiritual transubstantiation, of which the popish wafer is not a symbol, but a

¹ I have already made this statement on another occasion, with a somewhat different object. But as this is the theory which supports the papal doctrine of transubstantiation, converting the great primordial truth of Christianity into an idol,—a theory deriving its existence from an ambiguous use of the term *body*,—I

am not sorry to recur to it again and again. It is not, however, of the sacramental symbol which I am now speaking, but of the divine mystery itself.

² Sermon XVI.

³ Διὰ τὸν ἐνοικήσαντα λόγον ἐν τούτοις διὰ τοῦ ἐνὸς σώματος. —ATHAN. *de incarn.* See Note at the end of this Sermon.

base and idolatrous counterfeit,—it is of this that we participate in the communion of the Lord's body and blood, whether we regard the idea itself, or the awful fact to which it corresponds in the divine economy, or the particular mode in which it is effectuated in the Church¹.

But what does this amount to? Must we not infer that we are, through faith and in the *reality* of our Christian calling, mysteriously associated with all the acts and sufferings of that body, with which we are thus essentially united, as well as in the immortality with which it has been crowned²? “I am the vine, ye are the branches³,” so said the Lord Himself to His disciples. “We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones⁴,” so wrote His apostle and ambassador. Shall not the branches sympathize with the trunk,—the members with the head? Shall not the motion of the heart be propagated to the extremities, not by successive pulsations, as in the world of nature, but by an immediate and simultaneous energy, as in a world of spirit, the realm of the Redeemer, and the region of His everlasting presence? But if so—what are the consequences? They are indeed most blessed. “I will not leave you comfortless,” said Jesus, “I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: *because I live, ye shall live also*. At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you⁵.” How truly this was fulfilled, when the comforter was indeed come, we may learn from St. Paul, to whom this divine union and intercommunication is a perpetual theme of admiration and of praise. “God,” he declares, “hath not appointed us

¹ Compare 1 Cor. x. 17, with Heb. iii. 14, and 2 Pet. i. 4. See also Gal. iii. 27.

² 1 Pet. iv. 13.

³ John xv. 5.

⁴ Eph. v. 30.

⁵ John xiv. 18—20.

to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we should *live together with Him*¹.” “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me².”

But what is this? I am *crucified* with Christ? If this flesh and blood which we inherit, this human nature which is our *natural* selves, and “in which dwelleth no good thing³,” is indeed to be changed and transfigured, that it may be translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son, where “nothing shall in any wise enter that defileth⁴.” What is the cause of this effect? Where is the process leading to this result?

It has been gone through by Christ on our behalf. We *look* to Him, and are saved! We live by the *faith* of the Son of God. Yea, verily, *He* was made sin *for* us, who knew no sin. The perfect work was accomplished, in one sense, before the foundation of the world⁵; in another sense, “once, at the end of the world,” or worldly dispensation. “When we were yet without strength, *in due time* Christ died for the ungodly⁶,” “the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.” And the full produce of this ineffable love is transferred to us *through faith*, “being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit⁷.” “Whether life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are ours; and we are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s⁸.” “By grace are we saved through faith⁹.”

¹ 1 Thes. v. 9, 10.

² Gal. ii. 20. Compare the sublime passage Rom. viii. 19—23, and inquire how “the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption,” and again, what is meant by “the adoption” as equivalent to “the redemption of the *body*.”

³ Rom. vii. 18.

⁴ Rev. xxi. 27.

⁵ 1 Pet. i. 19, 20. Rev. xiii. 8.

⁶ Rom. v. 6.

⁷ 1 Pet. iii. 18.

⁸ 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

⁹ Eph. ii. 8.

But in what way? How does faith operate to realize this consequence? Surely by enabling us to see and assert that mysterious union with the Redeemer, which makes us, not our own, but His: our life His life, our acts His acts, our sufferings His sufferings. Redemption has indeed been wrought *for* us, when “there was none to help¹;” but to be available, it must, through faith, be wrought *in* us. We must “work out our own salvation, with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in us, both to will and to do².”

And what is the redemptive process thus actually carried on within us by Christ, and by ourselves in mystical union with Christ? Is it not the “putting off the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts³?” Is it not to “mortify the deeds of the body, through the Spirit⁴?” Is it not the crucifixion of “the flesh, with the affections and lusts⁵?” Is it not to be “found in Christ, that we may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death⁶.” Is it not to “glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world⁷?” Is it not to bear in the “body the marks of the Lord Jesus⁸?” Is it not, in a word, to be reconciled to God, by Him, “in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell,”—“in the *body of His flesh*, through death⁹.”

And this done, or if we speak of the fact, as it is doing, in so far as it is done, to “put on the new man,

¹ Isa. lxiii. 5.

² Phil. ii. 12, 13.

³ Eph. iv. 22.

⁴ Rom. viii. 13.

⁵ Gal v. 24.

⁶ Phil. iii. 10.

⁷ Gal. vi. 14.

⁸ Gal. vi. 17.

⁹ Col. i. 19, 22. Compare verse 24, and inquire what the apostle means by “filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, for his body’s sake, which is the Church.”

which, after God, is created in righteousness, and true holiness¹,”—“created in righteousness, and renewed in knowledge²,”—“the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible³,”—“walking not after the flesh, but after the spirit⁴,”—“that we may be presented holy, and unblamable, and unreprouvable in the sight of God⁵.”

But when by grace operating through faith, this blessed transformation has actually taken place, *after communion with Christ*, then it is that we are admonished by the apostle, in this our character of *new creatures*, to “present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service⁶.”

Let me now briefly gather up and conclude the argument. It appears from numberless passages of Scripture, adopted and applied in the communion service of the English Church, that the Christian life may properly be characterized as a sacrifice and oblation, corresponding respectively to the death of sin, actually accomplished in our mortal bodies, and the devotion of the new creature, supervening upon, and supplanting the old, to the will and service of God; notions mentally distinct, but strictly correlative, and uniting in the same act at the same moment. We are expressly commanded to present our bodies, that is to say, ourselves, our own persons, as opposed to any external offering, which the Gospel revelation declares to be utterly vain, except as it may be a sign of that which is within; “a living sacrifice,”—living, not as if the notion of death truly suffered, were hereby excluded, for we “*always* bear about the *dying* of the Lord Jesus⁷,” but as contrasted with the dead, and

¹ Eph. iv. 22.² Col. iii. 10.³ 1 Pet. iii. 4.⁴ Rom. viii. 4.⁵ Col. i. 22.⁶ Rom. xii. 1.⁷ 2 Cor. iv. 10.

merely typical sacrifices of the law, now for ever superseded by the real atonement made by Christ. Yea, and the self-sacrifice thus presented is pronounced to be “holy and acceptable to God,” so high are the privileges placed within our reach by the Gospel; not surely for any natural worthiness or acquired merit of our own: nor yet as if our offering had no inherent graciousness or fragrancy, and were accepted, though in itself corrupt and unsavoury, for the sake of something else: no, it is holy, or it cannot have been hallowed; it is acceptable, or it could not be accepted: no, but because it is steeped in the cleansing blood of the Lamb, and thus made pure indeed. Further, this oblation is declared to be “our reasonable service,” calling into active exercise all our moral and intellectual faculties, and directing them in conformity with that eternal reason, which is the ground and substance of truth, to their true end, the performance of religious duty, and the promotion of the divine honour. Such a sacrifice would be impossible, were it not included and absorbed in the one, great, all-sufficient sacrifice and self-oblation, for ever operant and effectual, made by the Son of man, the ever-present Immanuel in His own person for all His human brethren¹. But this great sacrifice is

¹ ATHAN. *Orat.* ii. *contra Arian.* Vol. i., p. 377. Πιστὴν θυσίαν προσφέρει τὴν μένουσαν καὶ μὴ διαπίπτουσαν. And similarly, with regard to the priesthood, ὁ δὲ κύριος ἀπαράδοτον καὶ ἀδιάδεκτον ἔχων τὴν ἀρχιερωσύνην, πιστὸς γέγονεν ἀρχιερεὺς, ἡ παραμένων ἄει. In what way a real priesthood is enjoyed and exercised both by individual believers^a,

^a Hence Baptism was called *Sacerdotium Laici*: Laymen's Priesthood. See BINGHAM, i. 3.

and also by a fixed sacerdotal order, compatibly with, and in express subservience to, the one sole, paramount, and perpetual priesthood of Jesus Christ, the former being, in fact, a mere efflux from the latter, by which it is specially manifested according to the divine promise and command, I have shown at length in a former Sermon. It is but another application of the same principle for which I am now contending. That this principle must in effect have

itself involved in the mysterious fact of the divine incarnation. To become subject to death, and in this way to mortify and destroy the sinful nature to which this penalty is attached, while by the regenerative power of the Word, quickening and spiritualizing its earthly tabernacle, a new and heavenly nature supervenes, even the HOLY ONE of God, whom the grave could not hold, nor corruption taint;—this on the one hand, and on the other to dedicate Himself, during a period of humiliation and suffering, cheered and supported by angelic visitations and heavenly ministries;—such was the work undertaken

been admitted by Athanasius is evident from the above passage, in which he insists so forcibly on the permanency of the original sacrifice and high priesthood, “without tradition or succession” of the Lord Himself. Yet no one can doubt that he regarded the representative system of the Church as fraught with a living efficacy, derived to it from this very source. And in general we find the person, attributes, and offices of the Redeemer exalted, in unlimited terms, by the great catholic doctors of antiquity, as the substance and reality of all true, spiritual, and rational religion, (as may be seen at large in the quotations of the early Protestant controversialists,) while on the other hand, these terms are transferred to the evangelical appointments of the visible Church, with a freedom and unreserve, accompanied with a passionate earnestness, extremely startling to modern feelings, and liable to serious misconstructions of more than one kind. It is plain, however, that *they* did not so much as suspect any incompatibility between these lines of expression; nor does

it, in fact, exist. Spiritually interpreted, they mutually explain and enforce each other. It was not till the mystical power exhibited in the structural ordinances of Christianity was confounded with the εἶδωλον, or phenomenal representation through which it was exercised, that the outward service and inward life of religion began to be at variance. It was not till this confusion was formally recognised and asserted, that the two became actually disjoined. It then became necessary to reconcile the Church and the Spirit by an appeal to the written word. This was the proper object of the Reformation. Alas! that the destruction of the former as a living body should ever have been hazarded by degrading the spiritual symbol to a mere emblem. But extremes meet: and the importance attached to the latter thus reduced to a mere form, becomes itself a species of idolatry. It is this which has, doubtless, influenced the Quakers to reject the use of sacraments entirely. They have abandoned the substance, not for the sake, but for fear of the shadow.

and gloriously achieved by the Son of God, in obedience to His Father's will, by an express and unlimited unction from the eternal Spirit. But forasmuch as this great mystery, though truly, perfectly, and effectually revealed, in the acts and sufferings of the man Christ Jesus, as recorded in the Gospel history, in whose person "*God was manifest in the flesh*"—is yet by this union of the Godhead with the manhood, rendered co-extensive with human nature, (a truth, brought to light by the Gospel, for the benefit of all mankind, but stimulated into life and power only by individual faith, the gift of grace,) if, therefore, the earthly course of our divine Head, the Captain of our salvation, be specially represented in Scripture, as a *sacrifice* and *oblation*, (with a view to certain practical inferences of the deepest concernment,) these terms may properly be transferred to the new man, in general, as personally realized, through faith, by individual believers. Provided always that we know nothing but Christ and Him crucified, trust in nothing but Christ and the power of His resurrection—crucified on the cross, reviving from the grave, and in heart and mind ascending into heaven with the risen body of the one Redeemer, seeing Him in all that we do, and in all that we are, apart from "the body of this death¹." "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living²."

And again, provided that we carefully distinguish between the living truth and its phenomenal accidents,

¹ Rom. vii. 24.

² Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 9.

“which perish in the using,” and accept of no substitute for a true, personal, and spiritual service, approved by reason, and dictated by conscience; a real dedication of the whole inward man of the heart.

Nor is this a mere speculative deduction from Scripture. God forbid—the transference, or to speak properly, the identification here spoken of, not only may, but must be, and is so made, with high and reverend acknowledgments, not only by the apostles and sacred writers, in numberless passages of holy writ, but in the forms and constitution of the visible Church, which they embodied:—in its one baptism and profession of faith, in its sacred orders and perpetual succession, in its common assemblies, whether for prayer, for instruction, or for counsel, in its mutual charities of every kind, religious, social, or political, in the confession of its eminent saints, and in the writings of its accredited doctors. In all we discern the presence and power of the incarnate Word, as identified with the new man, and the body of His redeemed. However imperfectly this divine idea may have been actualized, far more than enough appears to prove that it exists as an objective truth, giving birth to those universal tendencies, which, though obscured and travestied, thwarted and overborne, have produced whatever is like Christ, or owns His spirit, in the world of man; tendencies, manifested in time, and traceable backward to the union of God with man, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and forward to that blessed era, when “the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth, as the waters cover the seas¹.” But by especial delegation is this sublime idea, the law of the visible Church, embodied in the Eucharist. “I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I

¹ Hab. ii. 14.

say. The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many, are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread¹."

I conclude, for the present, with the sober but spiritual language of our Church in the Collect for the Sunday before Easter, which embodies, in a general and practical form, the doctrine which I have attempted to elucidate in this Sermon.

Almighty and everlasting God, who of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility; mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of His patience, and also be made partakers of His resurrection, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

¹ 1 Cor. x. 15, 16, 17.

NOTE TO SERMON XVII.

PATRISTIC VIEW OF THE EUCHARIST, WITH REMARKS
ON THE EARLY FATHERS.

Συνιδὼν γὰρ ὁ λόγος κ.τ.λ.¹——ATHAN. *de Incarn. Verbi Dei. Opera*, Vol. i. p. 43. Ed. Pad.

THE general sense of this passage may, perhaps, be thus conveyed to the English reader:—"For the Word perceived within Himself, that the corruption of human nature could in no wise be abolished, except through the actual suffering of death. Now the Word could not die, being immortal, and the Son of the Father. Therefore He took to Himself a body capable of death, that this, being made partaker of the Word, who is above all, might, instead of all, become a satisfaction to death by the offering of an equivalent substitute, and, through the Word indwelling, might continue incorruptible, that corruption might henceforth be stayed from all by the freely imparted power of His resurrection. Wherefore, offering to death the body which He had assumed, as a sacrifice and a victim without spot, He removed death from all His fellows. For the Word of God being above all, by presenting His own temple and organical body, life for life, on behalf of all, fitly and fully discharged in His death the debt that was due: and thus, as we may well believe, the incorruptible Son of God, *uniting Himself*

¹ See last Sermon, note, page 373.

through conformity of nature with all, hath invested all with incorruption by the promise of the resurrection. For mortal corruption hath, indeed, no longer any field of operation against men, because of the Word that dwells within them through the one body thus mysteriously communicated¹."

This representation of the great Christian mystery falls far short both of the sublime simplicity of the fourth Evangelist, or the vivid distinctness of the apostle of the Gentiles. It is, indeed, a compound of the several phases under which this all-important revelation appears in Scripture, perhaps not perfectly harmonized. It shows, however, the stress laid by the early Church on the fact of our blessed Lord's incarnation, as supplying a medium of communication between the perishing bodies of men, and the vivifying Word of God; this divine communion being the particular mode in which "this corruptible is endued with incorruption, and this mortal with immortality." This appears still more clearly from the following passage, taken from the same treatise:—"For since the fatal prevalence of death over the human race is derived from man, or human nature," (the use of the plural in the original is very noticeable; compare 1 Cor. xv. 21; Rom. v. 12, 17,) "therefore conversely, the destruction of death and the resurrection unto life, took place through the assumption of human nature by the divine Word, as the *Christ-bearing* man avers; 'For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,' and that which follows. For we no longer die now as being condemned, but as being raised we

¹ See John vi. *passim*, 1 Cor. x. 17; xv. 35—50, and compare *Phil. Jud.* *Leg. All.* Vol. i. p. 120. Ed. Mangey.

await the common resurrection of all, which in its own time God will show, who hath wrought and freely imparted this also¹." This doctrine is, of course, principally derived from the sixth chapter of St. John, as compared with the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, and the whole tenor of Scripture.

Now that the same sublime truth was set forth, particularly in the Eucharist of the early Church, needs no proof². The spirituality and enlargement of mind apparent in the following words of Basil, may, however, excuse their introduction in this place. He is speaking of the eucharistic bread: "We eat His flesh and drink His blood, having communion with Him through the incarnation and sensible life of the (divine) Word and Wisdom. For He has named all His mystic conversation (in the body,) flesh and blood, and has set forth that doctrine,

¹ Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων εἰς ἀνθρώπους ὁ θάνατος ἐκράτησε, διὰ τοῦτο πάλιν διὰ τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου ἡ τοῦ θανάτου κατάλυσις γέγονε, καὶ ἡ τῆς ζωῆς ἀνάστασις, λέγοντος τοῦ χριστοφόρου ἀνδρός· "ἐπειδὴ γὰρ δι' ἀνθρώπου θάνατος, καὶ δι' ἀνθρώπου ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν· ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν, οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες ζωοποιηθήσονται." καὶ τὰ τούτοις ἀκόλουθα· οὐκέτι γὰρ νῦν ὡς κατακρινόμενοι ἀποθνήσκομεν, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐγειρόμενοι περιμένομεν τὴν κοινὴν πάντων ἀνάστασιν, ἣν καιροῖς ἰδίῳ δέξει ὁ καὶ ταύτην ἐργασάμενος καὶ χαρισάμενος θεός· αἰτία μὲν δὴ πρώτη τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως τοῦ σωτῆρος αὕτη. γνῶν

δ' ἂν τις αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀγαθὴν εἰς ἡμᾶς παρουσίαν εὐλόγως γεγενῆσθαι, καὶ ἐκ τούτων.—ATHAN. Opera. Vol. i. p. 45.

The Latin interpreter renders ἐγειρόμενοι, excitandi, and κατακρινόμενοι, damnandi. But St. Paul says, "There is no condemnation," &c. "If ye then be raised with Christ;" and Athanasius echoes his language. The present involves the future, but the future would exclude the present. Compare τοὺς σωζομένους, Acts ii. 47, falsely rendered "qui salvi fierent," in the Vulgate. Schleusner gives, "adductos ad Christianam religionem," which marks the tense, though it is not a translation, but an evasive explanation.

² Suicer voc Σύναξις. BINGHAM, xv. lib.

consisting of practical, natural, and theological¹, (that is, divine and transcendent,) through which the soul is nourished and trained the while to the contemplation (not of heavenly things exclusively, as contrasted with things on earth, but) of things that *are*; (things *as they are*, and not as they seem, the eternal realities of faith, as opposed to the phenomenal and transient presentations of sense; truths indeed, the materials of the heavenly Jerusalem, and of our own house not built with hands².) This, which appears to me the very marrow of Christian theology, may confirm us in the belief, that a spiritual interpretation is in fairness to be put on many other passages of more ambiguous import.

That the divine body, of which we thus partake, is represented in the Eucharist more particularly as the paschal lamb, and, hence, that the rite itself may be entitled a commemorative sacrifice, is, without all question, the judgment of antiquity. It is of more consequence to remark in what sense the primitive Church regarded it as *our* sacrifice: and here again we shall find nothing which is not manifestly spiritual: or if, from the metaphorical style in which they wrote, (itself the result of a tendency to symbolize ideal truth rather in visual forms,—the genial efflorescence of the southern and eastern mind,—than in abstract notions, the phantom progeny of the west and north,) when from these, or

¹ “*Quæ ex vitâ ipsius actuali,*” &c.,—so the Latin translator.

² Τρώγομεν αὐτοῦ τὴν σάρκα, καὶ πίνομεν αὐτοῦ τὸ αἷμα, κοινωνοὶ γινόμενοι διὰ τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως καὶ τῆς αἰσθητῆς ζωῆς τοῦ λόγου καὶ τῆς σοφίας· σάρκα γὰρ καὶ αἷμα, πᾶσαν

αὐτοῦ τὴν μυστικὴν ἐπιδημίαν ὠνόμασε· καὶ τὴν ἐκ πρακτικῆς καὶ φυσικῆς καὶ θεολογικῆς συνεστῶσαν διδασκαλίαν ἐδήλωσε δι’ ἧς τρέφεται ἡ ψυχὴ, καὶ πρὸς τὴν τῶν ὄντων τέως θεωρίαν παρασκευάζεται.—*BASIL. M. epist. cxli. p. 928.*

other causes, a contrary appearance presents itself, we are entitled by a fair analogy to give it the most favourable interpretation. For, in the first place, as is well observed by Bingham¹, the name of sacrifice was given to all the parts of divine service, a mode of speaking borrowed from Scripture, and by no means to be regarded as merely metaphorical, if indeed prayers and praises, alms and good deeds, with the general dedication of ourselves to God's service, possess as truly the nature of a sacrifice as those performed under the old covenant. It is not of the essence of a sacrifice to prefigure; it may commemorate, or it may barely acknowledge. In itself it is simply a consecrated offering to Almighty God, *through* which, but not *by* which, his favour is propitiated. But if the inward devotion of the heart be properly expressed in the outward tokens above enumerated, these are themselves summed up, and their sacrificial character asserted in the open celebration of the Eucharist, to which, without all doubt, this character (but only in a spiritual sense) was especially appropriated². "There is one sacrifice," says Chrysostom, "we perform no other sacrifice, but the same continually, or rather the memorial of a sacrifice³." This blending alternately of a double sense, which is, in fact, two forms of the same, is characteristic of this father, as we shall see anon. Again, it is called by St. Gregory, a bloodless sacrifice, through which we *communicate* with Christ, both in His *sufferings* and in His *divinity*⁴. I shall cite but one more instance: "We celebrate," says Cyril of Alexandria, "the holy, vivifying,

¹ Lib. xiii. 1, 5.

² BINGHAM, ii. 19, 15, who refers to Mede, Hicks, &c.

³ *Μία ἐστὶν ἡ θυσία. Οὐκ ἄλλην θυσίαν, ἀλλὰ τὴν αὐτὴν*

ἀεὶ ποιούμεν μᾶλλον δὲ ἀνάμνησιν ἐργαζόμεθα θυσίας.—Hom. 17 in Heb.

⁴ Orat. xlii. p. 692.

and unbloody sacrifice in our Churches, not believing the consecrated elements, (the *proposita*,) to be the body of one such as we are, a common man¹.

There is evidently nothing in this, when fairly interpreted, to which the strictest ecclesiastical Protestant might not subscribe; even if, in consequence of subsequent abuses, he should prefer another mode of expression: and well it were if the subject were always viewed in a light as simply and as brightly reflected from the revelation of God in Christ, as it shines from the page of Scripture. There is first the body of our passover, truly present and actually communicated, uniting all with each, and of many making one². But there is no conversion,

¹ SUICER, voc. *Θυσία*.

² Compare JUELL. *Apol.* p. 28. (Cant. 1838.) "Diserteque pronunciamus, in cœna credentibus vere exhiberi corpus et sanguinem Domini, carnem Filii Dei, vivificantem animas nostras, cibum superne venientem, immortalitatis alimoniam, gratiam, veritatem, vitam: eamque communionem esse corporis et sanguinis Christi, cujus participatione vivificamur, vegetamur, et pascimur ad immortalitatem, et per quem conjungimur, unimur, et incorporamur Christo, ut nos in illo maneamus, et ille in nobis." And again, page 32:—"Neque vero vana ea fides est, quæ Christum complectitur, nec frigide percipitur, quod mente, fide, et spiritu percipitur. Ita enim nobis in illis mysteriis, Christus ipse totus, quantus quantus est, offertur et traditur, ut vere sciamus, esse jam nos carnem de ejus carne, et os de ossibus ejus, et Christum in nobis manere, et nos in illo."

The symbolic meaning of the *κλάσις*, the breaking of the sacramental bread, is thus given by Suicer, (voc. *Σύναξις*):—"Mysterium fractionis duplex est. Per fractionem enim mors Christi significatur, et quod, sicut multa sunt panis frusta, sic multos *κοινωνίαν* cum uno corpore habere." I venture to think that the latter is the direct scope of this action. Ad distribuendum comminuitur, (to borrow the words of St. Augustine,) spiritually as well as visually: *συμβολικῶς τὴν ἐνότητα πληθύνει καὶ διανέμει*, as we are taught by Dionys. Areop. Chrysostom is still more express. *Διὰ τί δὲ προσέθηκεν, ὃν κλῶμεν; τοῦτο γὰρ ἐπὶ μὲν τῆς εὐχαριστίας ἐστὶν ἰδεῖν γινόμενον. ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦ σταυροῦ οὐκέτι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦναντίον τούτῳ. Ὅστοῦν γὰρ αὐτοῦ, φησιν, οὐ συντριβήσεται. Ἀλλ' ὅπερ οὐκ ἔπαθεν ἐπὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ, τοῦτο πάσχει ἐπὶ τῆς προσφορᾶς διὰ σέ, καὶ ἀνέχεται*

or elemental change of the material symbols, no transubstantiation necessarily implied, apart from the divine renewal, and spiritual transfiguration of human nature itself, of which Christianity at large is the mean, and the Eucharist, in an eminent sense, the sign and seal,—a supernatural process individualized in the believer through his faith, as by every other act of his religious life, so especially at the Lord's table¹. And if the condition of faith be less insisted on than with us, the same lesson was taught in the much more careful selection of communicants.

But, again, the mortal passion of the Saviour, as the especial mark of His manhood², is in the Eucharist of the early Church specially set forth and commemorated; and this as the everlasting sacrifice, offered by Christ Himself, once for all, subjectively and objectively, in and for the alienated nature of man, by which alone the divine favour

διακλώμενος, ἵνα πάντας ἐμπλήσῃ.—Hom. 24. in 1 Cor. The sacred body was not broken on the cross; it died, yet remained entire, according to prophecy, and with a deep spiritual signification. But in the oblation it is broken and divided that it may feed and satisfy all. In fact, the bread only is broken, the body is distributed, Christus ipse totus, quantus, quantus est.

¹ “Neque enim id Christus egit ut panis triticeus abjiceret naturam suam, ac novam quandam divinitatem indueret: sed ut nos potius immutaret, utque Theophylactus loquitur, transelementaret in corpus suum.” JUELL. *Apol.* p. 30. There must, however, be an immediate connexion between the “panis triticeus” and this

spiritual change. The bread does not lay aside its nature *per se*, but surely it is differently affected towards us. Say, rather, that the Saviour's blessing has qualified His creatures of bread and wine to support and nourish, not as heretofore the body of sin, but the new man from heaven, the incorruptible and immortal, superinduced by our union with Christ. “*This is My body.*” This is co-elemental with my bodily nature, wheresoever imparted, and fitted to sustain and feed it; fitted, therefore, to make your bodies temples of the Holy Ghost, through the Word and wisdom of God: thus was “every creature” redeemed in Christ. See Romans viii.

² John xix. 34, 35. Heb. ii. 9

is propitiated to our fallen race; a sacrifice implying, first, the death of sin, and, secondly, the devotion of a holy, heavenly, and spiritual personage to God. But it is not the doctrine of the ante-Nicene fathers, (whatever ambiguity may rest on a few passages,) that this sacrifice is *repeated*, or any way *effected* by the instrumentality of man in the solemn celebration of the Church. On the contrary, the most enlarged and “reasonable” views on this deeply important question meet us at every turn. We are admonished to offer our own souls in sacrifice, dying unto the world, and to the fleshly mind¹, crucifying ourselves and immolating our sinful imaginations², that we may be holy, as Christ is holy, and in this our new character may dedicate our persons to God’s service in His sanctuary. But how? Not by bare imitation of the Saviour, as if this of itself would supply grace, but by a divine assimilation to His nature. And this explains the sublime language of the Alexandrian Clemens:—“These virtues I pronounce to be an acceptable sacrifice to God, the Scripture declaring, that an humble heart informed with right knowledge is God’s holocaust³, since every man who is taken up into (the Saviour’s) holiness is thoroughly enlightened unto the indiscernible union⁴.” How apostolic!

And as this self-oblation coincides with the whole devotional life of the Christian, so is it peculiarly solemnized in holy communion, when not merely all that we are, but all that we do and have, our prayers, our alms, and those very creatures of bread and wine (but not these exclusively), from which the holy symbols are taken, are

¹ Ἱερουργεῖν τὰς ψυχὰς, καὶ Θεῷ προσάγειν. Cyril of Alexandria.

² CHRYE. *Hom.* xxii. in Joh.

³ Ὀλοκάρπωμα, perhaps an oblation of the entire harvest, and not merely the first fruits.

⁴ Clem. Alex. *Strom.* vii. p. 706.

presented on God's altar. And this introduces me to the most critical part of the inquiry, the part assigned to the Christian Priesthood in this celebration¹. We have seen Christ declared to be our only Priest. We have seen the people characterized as a holy Priesthood. Is it essential that an officiating minister, separated to this office, should stand, as it were, between the two, to present the spiritual oblations of the people, in their name, and as one of themselves, and to declare, on the part of the Saviour, as His ambassador, the corresponsive blessing:—relatively to the flock, a pastor, but in relation to the chief shepherd, one, it may chance, the least distinguished of His flock. I need not say that the judgment of antiquity decides this question in the affirmative.

As this, however, is the pivot, on which the whole question of the eucharistic sacrifice, practically considered, will be found to turn, I shall conclude this inquiry by a reference to one of those splendid passages in St. Chrysostom, which have been so much misunderstood, (perhaps not without some indiscretion on the part of the writer,) but which, when the general style of this author is considered, appears to me, at worst, as a dangerously vivid delineation, giving too firm an outline to a profound idea, which cannot be more than partially represented². "Christ is present, and now He, who ordered that

¹ "Above this was the power of offering up to God the people's sacrifices at the altar; that is, as Mr. Mede and others explain them, first the Eucharistical oblations of bread and wine, to agnize or acknowledge God to be the Lord of the creatures; then the sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving in commemoration of Christ's bloody sacrifice upon the cross, mystically

represented in the creatures of bread and wine, which whole sacred action was commonly called the Christian's reasonable and unbloody sacrifice, or the sacrifice of the altar."—BINGHAM, xix. 2. 15.

² Referred to by Bingham, xv. 3, 11, but neither his translation nor his comment, are, I think, satisfactory.

table, the same also orders this now. For it is not man who makes the elements to become Christ's body and blood, but He Himself who was crucified for us, even Christ. The Priest stands, (not "fulfilling His office," but) as His formal representative (*σχῆμα πληρῶν*, uttering those words; but the power and the grace is of God. "For this is my body," he says. This word (not simply consecrates, *ἀγιάζει*, or *εὐλογεῖ*, but *μεταρρυθμίζει*) *changes* the elements, (more strictly *transmodulates*, sets them in another and higher key.) And as that voice "which said, 'Increase and multiply, and replenish the earth,' was spoken but once, yet remains through all time, an energy in our nature effectual to its purpose, so this voice also, spoken but once, effects and consummates the sacrifice on every table throughout the churches, from that time to this day, and until His coming again¹."

After what has been said, it will not be necessary to point out the spiritual meaning of which this language is susceptible. At the same time it must be admitted that it lends itself but too easily to a very different interpretation. The error appears to me to lie not so much in the equivocal term which I have rendered *transmodulate*, (for this may imply a new qualification, exclusively spiri-

¹ Πάρεστιν ὁ Χριστός, καὶ νῦν ἐκεῖνος ὁ τὴν τράπεζαν διακοσμήσας ἐκείνην, οὗτος καὶ ταύτην διακοσμεῖ νῦν. οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος ἐστὶν ὁ ποιῶν τὰ προσκείμενα γενέσθαι σῶμα καὶ αἷμα Χριστοῦ· ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ὁ σταυρωθεὶς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν Χριστός. σχῆμα πληρῶν ἔστηκεν ὁ ἱερεὺς, τὰ ῥήματα φθεγγόμενος ἐκεῖνα· ἡ δὲ δύναμις, καὶ ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστι. τοῦτό μου ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμά, φησι. τοῦτο τὸ ῥήμα μεταρρυθμίζει τὰ προσκείμενα.

καὶ καθάπερ ἡ φωνὴ ἐκείνη ἡ λέγουσα· Αὐξάνεσθε καὶ πληθύνεσθε, καὶ πληρώσατε τὴν γῆν· ἐρρέθη μὲν ἅπαξ, διὰ παντὸς δὲ τοῦ χρόνου γίνεται ἔργον ἐνδυναμοῦσα τὴν φύσιν τὴν ἡμετέραν πρὸς παιδοποιεῖν· οὕτω καὶ ἡ φωνὴ αὕτη ἅπαξ λεχθεῖσα καθ' ἐκάστην τράπεζαν ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις, ἐξ ἐκεῖνου μέχρ' ἡμερον, καὶ μέχρ' τοῦ αὐτοῦ παρουσίας, τὴν θυσίαν ἀπηρτισμένην ἐργάζεται. CHRYSOSTOM, *Sermo* 79, Tom. v. p. 560

tual, and not a change of substance¹,) as in the too *definite* instrumentality assigned to the human agent. It was sufficient to say, that the Priest exhibits the *form* of the Saviour's office, but that the *power* rests with Himself. We must not, however, insist upon every analogy employed by this eloquent Father, to make his meaning intelligible and affecting. It was his object to produce a strong impression for practical purposes, not to furnish definitions for the use of controversy. Hence, with a view to deter unworthy communicants from the communion, he represents the sacred elements as a sort of *poison* when unworthily received. That his meaning was no other than that which every pious clergyman preaches to his congregation at this day, or certainly not less spiritual, might be easily proved, by a comparison with other passages in his works. Metonymies not less bold, are of perpetual occurrence in his works, on which no one dreams of grounding an argument. But, alas! when the picture held up for a moment before the eyes of the people, to flash upon them a particular portion of the truth, was taken as equivalent to the whole idea, when metaphors were arrested in their free course, and frozen into permanent dogmas, how sad were the consequences!

In the place of Christ's indivisible body, mysteriously communicated; in the place of a holy symbol recognised by faith, in the solemn assembly, as the appropriate mean of that communion; in the place of a representative person, and man of God, establishing by his presence and ministry, the outward and substantive truth of the

¹ The same may be said of the equivalent words, μεταστοιχειοῦν, μεταπλάττειν, μετατυποῦν, ἀνακαινοῦν, κ.τ.λ.—not to say that all these terms apply in the first instance to the human subject, and are used of Baptism, as well as of the sacred supper.

mystery, and determining the Saviour's blessing to the particular occasion; we have a reserved, an elevated, a worshipped host—a thing bought and sold,—and depending thereon, a venal and tyrannical priestcraft, inflicting needless torment, and imparting a false peace. Say, that the Priest *consecrates* the elements, and thus gives an objective reality to the transaction which the faith of the communicant renders subjective in his own person: and say, with our Church, that the wicked profane the sacrament of the Lord's body to their own condemnation, but in no wise, neither for good, nor evil, are they partakers of the body itself.

Such, I repeat, was the teaching of the early Church, as represented by the great christian doctors to St. Augustine inclusive. My reading in this direction has been too cursory, and my impressions too recent, to justify me in putting forth general views which imply an extensive and familiar acquaintance with the original authors. But a very little observation will, I think, suggest to the candid examiner, the following conclusion, as the first-fruits of his patristic studies: that the real value of the Greek and Latin Fathers has been not less obscured by the prepossessions of their uncompromising admirers, than by those of their strongly biassed, and sometimes unscrupulous opponents. By the first, they are invested with a mysterious sacredness, which scarcely leaves the mind at liberty to appreciate the true comparative excellence of by far the larger portion of their writings, while it gives to their undeniable errors and weaknesses a painful and embarrassing prominence, quite disproportionate to their actual magnitude. Besides, from the magic circle thus thrown around the great orthodox and catholic Fathers, some of

the most valuable writers of Christian antiquity must, of necessity, be withdrawn. The bold and animated Tertullian, the profound and intellectual Origen, the learned and indefatigable Eusebius,—these at least lie under a ban which renders their *authority* in matters of doctrine always questionable, where it is not superfluous. Even Cyprian, it appears, is not perfectly free from exception. The ambiguous position occupied by these distinguished authors, is indeed found to be so perplexing, that some practical rules have been given to meet a difficulty solely created by the light in which the subject is studied. Let the early christian fathers be read with the respect due to their known characters, as the great accredited writers of the Church, in their respective ages, with due allowance for the circumstances under which they wrote; let them, in a word, be read with selection, and judged on the score of their intrinsic merits, and I am persuaded that they would not merely command general admiration, but communicate general instruction. Distinguished from the canon of Scripture, by a marked and palpable difference,—a difference of kind which goes far to *prove* the peculiar inspiration of the latter, by making it sensibly *felt*¹, they

¹ “One of the most influential arguments, one of those, the force of which I feel even more than I see, for the divinity of the New Testament, and with especial weight in the writings of John and Paul, is the unspeakable difference between them and all other, the earliest extant writings of the Christian Church, even those of the same age, (as, for example, the epistle of Barnabas,) or of the next following, a difference that transcends all degree, and is

truly a difference in kind.”—COLERIDGE'S *Literary Remains*, Vol. iii.

In such a question the humblest testimony, bearing upon the minutest point of evidence, is valuable. I may, therefore, be permitted to mention, that I had made a note precisely to the same effect, after a continuous perusal of the *Patres Apostolici*, which would have appeared in my own words, had I not found myself thus anticipated. Perhaps the

yet exhibit, in many particulars, an apparent sympathy with the apostolical mind, (produced by obvious causes,) which would be perceived by many readers not without

sentiment admits of being thus generalized. The transcendently excellent, in whatever kind, is never so well appreciated as when we have made ourselves acquainted with that which comes next to it, in the same kind, particularly if produced under similar circumstances, and about the same period of time. We thus obtain a standard of comparison, and ascertain the extent of the difference.

Candour obliges me to add the conclusion of the above extract, lest I should be thought to conceal the opinion of one, whose authority I am every way bound to reverence, when seemingly at variance with my own:—"Nay, the catalogue of the works written by the Reformers, and in the two centuries after the Reformation, contain many, many volumes far superior in Christian light and unction to the best of the fathers. How poor and unevangelic is *Hermas* in comparison with our *Pilgrim's Progress*." Perhaps so: they wrote, with the added experience of a thousand eventful years, under influences of extraordinary excitement, in an age when the powers of the human mind were in their highest vigour, not as in the other case declining into an universal feebleness, to which the Christian writers offered the longest, the most successful, and eventually the only resistance. Above all, they were in possession at starting of all that the fathers and schoolmen had already accomplished, the extent and value of

which can hardly be over-estimated. Nay, if it should be said, that the latter had made their scholars superior to themselves, this is a praise which could not, without hesitation, be awarded to the former. In what school were the reformers themselves, and their immediate successors trained?

Hermas is an unfortunate instance; and, in general, the uncanonical pieces of the apostolic age, are of too slight and occasional a character to provoke a comparison: but, surely, a richer offering of mental gifts has rarely been thrown into the treasury of God's service, than was presented by an Origen, an Athanasius, a Chrysostom, or an Augustine. Surely the Church has never had servants from whom, in their time and place, she has derived ampler or more enduring benefits. Be this, however, as it may, whatever imperfections or indiscretions can fairly be imputed to these great teachers; nay, admitting that the spirituality of their minds had sunk in a considerable degree under the pressure of their age, still the great evangelical idea has a *sacramental presence*, if I may so speak, in their writings, (as, indeed, everywhere in the early Church,) that renders their speculative and logical character of secondary importance. They still appear conversant with the truth; they have it, as it were, in their hands; and exhibit it, as they received it, in palpable forms, even

considerable surprise. Not less remarkable is the liberal spirit of investigation and inquiry, very generally displayed in their writings; and this, notwithstanding the earnest vehemence with which they assert those truths, for which, however remote and speculative they may be deemed by some, they held themselves bound to contend, in the face of bonds and exile, disgrace, confiscation, and death. Seldom, I believe, if ever, at least during the first three centuries, do we find them insisting upon that opposition between faith and reason, which afterwards became so favourite a tenet with a certain class of theologians¹.

when their own comments and deductions appear shadowy, or positively objectionable. Hence, independently of their individual merits, (which, however, appear to me pre-eminent,) they have a value as *witnesses*, which can never be superseded, and hardly, I think, dispensed with. Whatever mischiefs may have arisen from an excessive deference to the authority of the fathers, the general neglect of patristic reading in the last age synchronized with a jejune, lifeless, and unsteady theology, and may almost be said to have produced, negatively, what the opposite positive would have gone far to prevent.

¹ Thus in the short passage of Athanasius above quoted, he twice used the word *εἰκότως*, as is likely. Indeed a somewhat over-studious desire to render the mysterious doctrines of the Gospel intelligible, by metaphors and analogies, may, perhaps, be more fairly objected to these doctors, than any disinclination to grapple with the subject, on the field of

open argument. But the authority of St. Chrysostom will be objected to the statement in the text, which I have therefore limited to the three first centuries of the Christian æra, though with some restrictions it may be extended at least to the council of Nice: and indeed it must be admitted, that an ambiguous mode of expression is frequent in this father, equally capable of being interpreted in the spirit of succeeding, as of preceding times. His way of speaking of the sacrament is notoriously a case in point. Spiritually understood, the pictures which he draws of the great eucharistic solemnity appear only as specimens of a most splendid and gracious rhetoric, sometimes rising into the most vivid poetry. Read according to the letter, and they go far to justify the Tridentine decrees. Thus, without being aware of it, (for it need not be doubted that he speaks with perfect sincerity, if not with simplicity,) he has two faces, set in opposite directions, and is enabled to return a smiling

On every subject Holy Scripture is fully and reverentially produced ; so fully that almost the whole of the New Testament, and a great part of the Old, might be

answer to querists of very different views and intentions. Eminently practical both in the turn of his mind, and by the necessities of his position, he puts everything in the most tangible shape ; and for this the extraordinary vividness of his imagination, (only to be paralleled by our own Chrysostom, the accomplished Jeremy Taylor,) offered the most tempting facilities. But with respect to the case in point, the following distinctions must be taken. First, all those passages must be set aside in which faith is spoken of as antecedent to knowledge. Οὐτε ἡ γνῶσις ἀνευ πίστεως, οὐτε ἡ πίστις ἀνευ γνώσεως,—*Clem. Alex. Strom.* p. 544, is the maxim for which I am contending, and with this the assertion of Theophylact, πρῶτον ἡ πίστις, εἶτα ἀπὸ ταύτης ἡ ἐπιγνώσις, (ad vi. cap. i. ad Titum, p. 890,) is in perfect harmony. For this is a truth involved in the very essence of the Christian revelation, and, in fact, so far from favouring the tenet of which I am speaking, identifies faith with reason in the highest resort. Not more pertinent are those declarations which require the mysterious disclosures of God's word to be believed against the evidence of sense—καὶ ἡ φύσις μάχηται. For this is a self-evident proposition. Whatever in the word of God is above or besides nature is a *mystery*, which by its definition can only be spiritually discerned. If it could be measured by the natural understanding, it would cease to be a mystery.

Equally remote are those passages which speak of faith as the parent of obedience, rather than of a prying and impertinent curiosity. Ὑπακοῆς ἡ πίστις δεῖται, οὐ πολυπραγμοσύνης. *CHRYST. Hom.* xxvii. in Ep. ad Rom. p. 213, (as referred to in Suicer,) for it is a moral submissiveness which is here recommended ; a practical acquiescence in the divine counsel, however secret the motive by which it is determined. This is evident from the context. Lastly, we must abstract from this particular question the views of those who maintain that *simple faith*, (*nuda fides*,) independent of intellectual inquiry, is the only form of belief possible, among the people at large. Thus when Celsus had reproached the early Christians with servile credulity, Origen replies, that Christianity, to say the least, (ἵνα μὴ φορτικὸν τι εἶπω,) dealt as largely, and entered as fully into rational investigations as any philosophy whatever, and if it were practicable, would adopt no other plan. But since the necessities of life, and the weakness of the human mind, oppose an insuperable bar to the general adoption of such a principle, he very reasonably demands from the sick in mind the same trust in the spiritual physician, which they were willing to place in those who undertook the cure of their bodily ailments : that is, to judge from the effects already produced upon others in a like case. Nay, he affirms that such was the practice in the dif-

recovered from the citations of the fathers of the first four centuries. But nowhere do we find that idealess dogmatism which has long been the common characteristic of more than one party in the Church. On the

ferent schools of philosophy, and could not be otherwise. No man had time or patience to try all, before he fixed on any. They were determined in their choice by some single reason, hastily admitted, and of the most general kind. The whole passage, which is too long to extract, is the perfection of good sense; but mark the conclusion. "How much more," he asks, "is it right to trust in the God, who is above all, and in him who teaches men to worship Him alone, and to deem other matters of slight importance, either as having no existence, or as existing indeed, and worthy of honour, but not of worship and adoration?" *Περὶ ὧν ὁ μὴ πιστεύων μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ λόγῳ θεωρῶν τὰ πράγματα, ἐρεῖ τὰς ὑποπιπτούσας αὐτῷ, καὶ εὕρισκομένας ἐκ τοῦ πάνυ ζητεῖν ἀποδείξεις*: "concerning which things, not he that simply believes, but he that rationally considers the matters, shall assign the proofs that occur to him, having discovered them by close investigation^a."

Now Chrysostom was, in the strictest sense, a *popular* preacher. He addresses himself, not exclusively, but principally, *τοῖς ἐξωτέροις*. And hence, when he affirms that nothing is worse than to commit spiritual truths to reasonings, *οὐδὲν χεῖρον τοῦ τοῖς λογισμοῖς τὰ πνευματικὰ ἐπιτρέπειν^b* and in another place

avows that he receives that by faith only, which he cannot discover by reasoning, *Λογισμῷ μὲν εὐρεῖν οὐ δύναμαι, πιστεῖ δὲ δέχομαι μόνῃ^c*, his meaning, for those who could apprehend it (*οἱ μεμνημένοι ἴσασιν*) is, or may be, that given above,—that the mysterious truths of revelation, being insusceptible of sensible comparison, cannot be reduced to syllogisms. As he says elsewhere, with his accustomed felicity, "The high-born nature of faith demands a youthful vigour of soul, that soars above all the objects of sense, and outstrips the feebleness of human reasonings. *Τὸ τῆς πίστεως γενναῖον νεανικῆς δεῖται ψυχῆς, καὶ πάντα ὑπερβαινούσης τὰ αἰσθητὰ, καὶ τὴν ἀσθένειαν τῶν λογισμῶν ἀνθρωπίνων παρερχομένης^d*" words which readily accommodate themselves to a philosophic explanation, while they admonish the people at large not to risk their substantial blessings upon abstruse arguments, for which they had neither time, faculties, nor vocation. The next step was to make these prohibitions absolute, till at length, to begin to think, and to cease to believe, were held to be convertible propositions. On this characteristic of the Romish Church, see Mr. Gladstone's admirable statements in the fifth chapter of his recent publication, *The Church in its Relations to the State*.

^a ORIG. *contra Celsum*. Lib. i, p. 8, 9, 10.

^b Hom. xxvi. in Joh.

^c Idem.

^d Hom. xxii. in Heb.

contrary, a mode of teaching is pursued, to modern feelings, I fear, somewhat strangely opposed to it. They recognised a *living* power of the Church; and hence, while they cherished its traditional forms and catholic observances with a reverential, perhaps in the opinion of some, a superstitious respect, there is yet a readiness to render a reason for the faith which they professed, a reliance on the Spirit of God, as a continual fountain of light, together with a fulness and freedom of discussion exceedingly edifying, and, at the same time, exceedingly unlike the tone and temper of those who deem the control of an external authority inconsistent with the lawful exercise of reason, and not more opposed to the rationalist who would dispense with the first, than to the Romanist who would preclude and anathematize the other; equally at variance, therefore, with the ultra ecclesiastical rule, which acknowledges no guide but the written dogmas of the Church, and the ultra Protestant opinion, which accepts of no foreign aid in the interpretation of Scripture. In fact, many of them had been trained in the schools of Greek philosophy, and had passed through various shades of opinion before they finally settled "in the truth as it is in Jesus." They had been content to "try all things;" and thus learnt, with the most enlightened conviction to know, and with the steadiest determination to hold fast "that which is good." Surely these conflicts of which St. Augustine, recording his own experience, has left us so interesting a picture¹, may spare us the risk and the pain of similar, or, at least, the same trials; but they will not indispose us to engage in such intellectual exercises as may yet be necessary either to ascertain, to defend, or to recommend the truth.

¹ *Confessions*, lib. vi. vii.

Nay, when we behold these proud, exulting, and vigorous minds, after long roaming in flowery but innutritious pastures, brought at length, by the grace of God overcoming a rebel and reluctant will, into the courts of the Lord's house,—a holy and acceptable sacrifice,—and there bound by the cords of a sincere devotion, “even to the horns of the altar,” we see how well the exercise of the highest mental faculties consorts with the Christian character, and are taught to look with hope and charity upon the erring speculations of other inquirers, while we are awed into humility ourselves.

Again, the allegorizing spirit, of which they have been accused, is a very different thing from the same tendency, as exhibited by Pseudo-rationalists in modern times. There is no desire shown to escape from the letter, or lower the doctrine of Scripture. A passionate and, therefore, turbid sense of divine truth; an intuition coloured and refracted by the media through which it passes; a mind full to overflowing with the materials of religious knowledge, commanding with more mastery than judgment a most powerful intellect; such is the least honourable parentage that can be assigned to the sublime allegories of an Origen or an Augustine. Ever intent on those deep truths, which are at best rather to be suggested than expressed, and ever sensible of their existence, as living powers in the soul, they freely adopted the visible forms supplied by Scripture, or even by the material world, as vehicles in which to make them known, and sometimes, perhaps, imposed both upon themselves and others as objective realities, the reflection of their own thoughts; a delusion the more easily practised when the phantom is not wholly visionary, but fills up, and conforms to its own likeness some outward but

accidental resemblance. Haunted by the truth, as by a spirit too mighty and too active for their perfect control, and regarding it not as a philosophical speculation dwelling in the pure empyrean of the mind, (like the sublime theories of that Athenian in whose school so many of them had been trained,) nor as a sabbath thought kept apart from the ordinary business of life, for the leisure of a holiday and the quiet of the temple; they saw it everywhere, and in everything. How much, indeed, they effected towards reducing the revelation of Jesus Christ under manageable forms of thought and speech, calculated to preserve its integrity, and communicate it, under certain conditions, to other men, may be perceived at a glance by an inspection of our own Liturgy; (though we must distinguish between the silent growth of devotional forms, and the materials out of which they are composed;) while the writings of controversial divines of every age furnish ample proof of another kind. Eventually these forms became only too rigid and too compact, substituting a system of definite notions for the all-inspiring idea, the "life and immortality brought to light in the Gospel." Of inestimable value, so long as they are understood to be suggestive symbols merely, they are found to be mischievous when taken absolutely, and so adopted as grounds of truth. But this result, whether for good or evil, was for future times. For the fathers themselves there was still an unappropriated portion,—an indefinite remainder of truth,—by which they felt themselves encompassed. Hence—

A thousand fantasies
Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows *bland*,
And æry tongues that syllable men's names.

Hence an occasional indeterminateness in their assertions,

when that of which they speak is not so much *that* thing itself, as a *vagum individuum* realized by themselves, and, (as they seem to expect,) by others subjectively, but having no fixed dwelling-place anywhere¹.

I am far from assuming that this was without any ill effect: it gave rise to an easiness of belief, which accepted everything as fact that told, as they thought, favourably for the good cause. It *was* so, they were persuaded, because it *must* be so: and from this the step was easy to that pious fraud², as it has been most improperly styled,

¹ This description does not apply to the first Christian fathers alone; it holds good, *mutatis mutandis*, of all the great renovators of religion, and (under less favourable auspices) of the founders of sects; in a word, of all energetic and original minds, who have had occasion to unite speculative novelties with practical persuasion, and who, from whatever cause, have had to invent their own tools; the instrumental logic, I mean, employed by them in their preceptive capacity.

² See the long passage in CHRYSOSTOM'S *Tractate on the Priesthood*, which concludes the first book, commencing Θάρσει, ἔφη ἐγώ, to the end. He had practised, it seems, a well-meant deception on his friend Basil, and defends himself on the plea, that he had done it, both for his own good, and that of others. He takes up the principle that the end justifies the means, so far as truth is concerned, and alleges by way of analogy, the mode in which war is necessarily carried on, (Dolus an virtus quis in hoste requirat?) the conduct of a physician to his patient, and some scriptural

examples applied in a manner which would make the Bible very far from the best of books: εἶδες τῆς ἀπάτης τὸ κέρδος; he asks triumphantly. This is even too parallel to the dialogue between Neoptolemus and Ulysses in the *Philoctetes*.

N. οὐκ αἰσχρὸν ἡγεί δῆτα τὰ ψευδῆ λέγειν;

O. οὐκ, εἰ τὸ σωθῆναί γε τὸ ψεῦδος φέρει.

N. πῶς οὖν βλέπων τις ταῦτα τολμήσει λαλεῖν;

O. ὅταν τι δρᾷς ἐς κέρδος, οὐκ ὀκνεῖν πρέπει.

Altogether it appears a most indefensible piece of Jesuitry; yet there is a playfulness, I had almost said, simplicity about it, which makes it doubtful in what sense it is to be understood. It seems too open an avowal for so skilful a casuist to have made in earnest, and may, perhaps, be regarded as a play of fancy extremely out of place.

I am not, however, concerned to uphold this or any other uninspired divine in all points. My business is with the general character of patristic theology. In the next and last of these disser-

which, regarding nothing as true in effect, whatever it might be in appearance, that did not evidently contribute to advance the interests of truth, concealed or denied the evidence, of which *they* could not make an advantageous use. It is plain that we must not mistake the first for vulgar credulity, nor the second, however reprehensible, for sheer falsehood. It was not so for them, though it became so, when imitated, under very different impulses by their successors. At all events, it must not be magnified into a general charge; for many of the fathers, (as particularly Origen in his reply to Celsus,) display a remarkable degree of candour¹. But admitting these drawbacks in their fullest extent, and admitting besides that, together with the illustrious performances from which my quotations have been taken, the stream of time has brought down to us some specimens of primitive theology of very inferior quality, to what class of divines shall we refer, whose writings can be advantageously studied, without at least *equal* allowance, both for the superstitions of their age and for personal peculiarities? Passing over the schoolmen, whose extraordinary merits rather require to be pointed out than their evident defects, shall we recur to the period of the Reformation? What shall we say then to the burning of Servetus, defended by Calvin in an express treatise, and approved by the whole evangelical body? Or how shall we defend our own Jewel², one of the most decided of the English Protestants, who claims for his evangelical brethren the

tations I shall touch again upon the character of the early fathers, as connected with ecclesiastical tradition, a question also of immense importance, but quite dis-

tinged from that in which I am at present engaged.

¹ This is noticed by Paley: *Evidences of Christianity*, s. ix.

² *Apol. Ec. Ang.* p. 40. Cant. 1838.

praise, not merely of cursing all heretics, as they were classified by the primitive Church, including Arians of every shade, in a word all who differed from the received exposition of Scripture, to the gates of hell, but of coercing them severely and seriously with lawful and civil punishments? Or shall we set up our rest among the High Church writers of the three next generations, or with their opponents the puritans and non-conformists? Great, and good, and wise men we see among them, each a blessing to his contemporaries, and a light to his successors. But how much puerility, and how much intolerance still remains to be excused. We pass it over as we meet with it in their writings, and say, this is the defect of the age, not of the men. Nay, we extend the same measure of indulgence to still graver faults, to the servile flattery of one party, and the lawless fanaticism of the other: we say this would be base or frantic in our day; but at that period consorted with wisdom the most enlightened, and piety the most sincere. Or shall we superannuate every theological work of higher date than the Revolution, and confine ourselves to the writers of the last century? Here at last we are on the *terra firma* of good sense. Here at last we bid adieu to the demonology which has followed us in various forms from the vestibule of the primitive Church¹, to the bench of judgment under the

¹ BINGHAM iii. iv. 1—6: viii. iv. 6; add MIDDLETON'S *Free Inquiry*, sect. 3, of which work it may be said, that most of the facts and many of the immediate inferences may be admitted, while all the remote and general conclusions are denied. Its falsehood consists not so much in what it asserts, as in what it conceals; its

malignity not so much in the immediate scope as in its ulterior bearing and intention. The early Christian clergy acquiescing, perhaps sharing in a superstition, all but universal at the time, regarded certain classes of epileptic and distracted patients as suffering from demoniacal possession. For these a sort of hospital was pro-

second Charles¹. But how were this and the like superstitions discarded? how was the clearance effected? By leaving the outer walls of the temple unguarded, and driving the Spirit from its sanctuary. I am far from making this charge universal, or denying the deep obligations under which we lie to the lucid and intelligent divinity of our immediate predecessors. But that such was then the tendency of public opinion, both here and on the continent, and that it was not wholly withstood by the English Church will, I suppose, be denied by very few. Even here then, we have something to overlook in consideration of the times, in order to make a fair estimate of individual merit. Such a concession may freely be made on the part of the Greek and early Latin fathers,

vided in the pronaos or narthex of their Churches, and a particular description of persons appointed to take care of them. Their treatment was regulated by canon, and was of the most humane and judicious kind: that exorcism was commonly practised is certain. Incantation in some form or other has been the faith of the people in every age, and is far from exploded at the present day. But what part was taken by the Church in the matter? It first restrained the practice and turned it to a charitable purpose; then discouraged, and finally suppressed it. The same judicious course was taken in regard to necromancy, sortilege, astrology, and magic of every sort. To have argued or laughed the people out of these superstitions would have been impossible. You cannot do it now. But admitting them to be real,

they proved them to be wicked arts, and repressed them by ecclesiastical censures. (BINGHAM xvi. v. 1—5.) Oh! it is sad to see the Church wounded, and the Gospel through its side, by a weapon which five words of common sense convert into a rush.

¹ In 1665, as is well known, a woman was tried for witchcraft at Bury St. Edmund's, by Sir Matthew Hale, found guilty by the jury, with the full approval of that otherwise able and upright judge, and executed accordingly,—one proof among ten thousand, that we do gross injustice to the characters of the wise and good, when we measure them by a single weakness or inconsistency. Middleton speaks of a case of supposed demoniacal possession so late as 1695. See COLERIDGE'S *Literary Remains*, vol. iii. pages 159, 160.

and their real value be enhanced rather than compromised by the admission.

In conclusion, I would venture to recommend the study of the early fathers, as a corrective to extreme opinions of any kind. That independency or sectarianism should find any support in this quarter will not for a moment be suspected. A regular episcopacy, a traditional liturgy, and visible sacraments, producing a visible unity, kept up by catholic intercommunication and universal councils; such is the invariable picture presented to us of the primitive saints regarded as an outward body. And if we ask, by what invisible links the framework is held together, we are everywhere answered, The Spirit of Christ'. "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, and Father of us all, who is in all, and through all, and in us all". To see God in Christ, and recognise the living Spirit of truth, who proceeds from both; and again, to discern Christ in man redeeming the creature, *per humilitatem carnis*", and reconciling the world to His Father; to regard the Church, I repeat, as the mystical union of the redeemed in one divine harmony', or, in another point of view, as a system of heavenly ordinances, a visible firmament, the image of that unseen, in which

The soul that rises with us, our life's star¹,
is set to go through an appointed orbit of religious duty,

¹ Αἱ κατὰ πόλεις καὶ χώρας ἐκκλησίαι, πολλὰ τὸν ἀριθμὸν οὔσαι, μία ἐστὶν ἐκκλησία· εἰς γὰρ ἐν αὐταῖς ὁ Χριστὸς ἀπανταχοῦ, ὁ τέλειος καὶ ἀμέριστος.—CHRYST. *Hom.* 196, tom. v.

² Ephes. iv. 5.

³ St. Augustine.

⁴ Ἡ ἐκ πολλῶν ἐνωσις, ἐκ

πολυφωνίας καὶ διασπορᾶς ἁρμονίαν λαβοῦσα θεϊκὴν, μία γίνεται συμφώνια, ἐνὶ χορευτῇ καὶ διδασκάλῳ τῷ λόγῳ ἐπομένη ἐπ' αὐτὴν τὴν ἀληθεῖαν ἀναπαυομένη, Ἀββᾶ λεγούσα ὁ πατήρ.—CLEMENS *Alexand. in Protress.* 56, (from Suicer.)

⁵ Wordsworth.

culminating in the Eucharist; there to pause,—and if through faith the inner sense be roused from dormancy, and made capable of spiritual functions,—there to survey the heaven that is round about us¹, and listen to that celestial music which the clogged ear of flesh is incapable of hearing, while we contemplate the holy, happy rest of all those who have departed hence in the faith and fear of God, blessing Him for their blessedness, and praying for grace to follow their good examples; till the shadow of the earth have passed away, and the sun of righteousness rise in unclouded radiance, and fill this lower house with glory!

But is it urged, on the other hand, that patristic reading is favourable to the designs of the papacy? Two facts are sufficient to set aside this notion. First, that the Latin Church discouraged Greek learning during all the darker period of her domination, till it was forced upon her at the restoration of letters. And, secondly, that the battle of the Reformation was fought, at least in this country, with the fathers, the Greek fathers more particularly, in the front rank. But we may go further, and affirm that there is no inherent tendency in these inquiries, to foster even the milder and more engaging accesses of a Romanizing spirit. Conscientiously and impartially pursued, the study of these ancient monuments will, in the first place, destroy the vision of a golden age enjoyed by the Church, at some imaginary period, before the baptism of Constantine,—a dream notoriously without foundation, and injurious to the

¹ Δοκεῖ μοι ὁ μέγας Ἀπόστολος, ὁ πᾶσι τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν ἑαυτὸν ἐπεκτείνων, διαβὰς πάσης τῆς αἰσθητῆς φύσεως τοὺς ὄρους, εἰς τὴν νοητὴν κατάστα-
 σιν παρεισδύναι, οὐ σωματικῆς ἀκριβῶς γινομένης αὐτῷ τῆς τῶν νοητῶν θεωρίας.—GREG. Nyssen in *Hexaem.*, tom. i. p. 41, (from Suicer.)

interests of Christianity in many ways,—false to the hopes of Christianity as a progressive scheme, ungrateful to the divine Spirit, “who helpeth our infirmities,” whether as individuals or as bodies, carrying the Church forward towards perfection, even after deep declension: and likely, moreover, to discredit the outward beauty of holiness, by taking from it the attribute of growth, which is its proper and authenticating character; as if the temple of Ezekiel had been built up visibly upon the earth, by the cubit and the hand-breath, all at once, by unseen workmen, and at an unknown time. Not to mention the danger that accrues to the citadel of our holy faith, when it is surrounded by a wall of stubble for the puny hand of levity and the withered arm of malice to set fire to as they list. It will, as I have attempted to show, reveal the scriptural idea of Christianity in union with those forms, in which it has pleased the great Disposer to make it effectual to our salvation; but it will, at the same time, exhibit the Son of God, engaging in His reasonable service the whole being of the intellectual man, while it goes on to manifest that which the written divinations of heaven have ever led the world to expect, the mystic embrace and union of the human soul, and the redeeming Word.

To connect this most imperfect dissertation with the general object of a work, professing to treat on the scriptural character of the English Church, at a time when that Church is again menaced by those enemies from whom she formerly wrung so signal a victory, it will be sufficient to add the words of that reforming prelate, whose language I have more than once adopted:—

“Quod si docemus sacrosanctum Dei Evangelium, et veteres episcopos, atque ecclesiam primitivam nobiscum

facere; nosque non sine justa causa et ab istis discessisse, et ad apostolos, veteresque Catholicos patres rediisse; idque non obscure, aut vafre, sed bona fide coram Deo, vere, ingenue, dilucide, et perspicue facimus: si illi ipsi qui nostram doctrinam fugiunt, et sese Catholicos dici volunt, aperte videbunt omnes illos titulos antiquitatis, de quibus tantopere gloriantur, sibi excuti de manibus, et in nostra causa plus nervorum fuisse quam putarint; speramus, neminem illorum ita negligentem fore salutis suæ, quin ut velit aliquando cogitationem suscipere, ad utros potius se adjungat¹."

¹ JUELL. *Apol.* p. 13. "Now if we make it appear, and that not obscurely and craftily, but before God, truly, ingenuously, clearly, and perspicuously, that we teach the most holy Gospel of God; and that the *ancient fathers* and the whole primitive Church are on our side, and that we have not without just cause left them, and returned to the apostles, and the *ancient catholic fathers*: and if they, who so much detest our doctrine, and

pride themselves in the name of catholics, shall apparently see that all those pretences of antiquity, of which they so immoderately glory, belong not to them, and that there is more strength in our cause than they thought there was, then we hope that none of them will be so careless of his salvation, but he will at some time or other bethink himself which side he ought to join with."—JEWELL'S *Apology*. The Lady Bacon's Translation.

SERMON XVIII.

ON THE SACRAMENTS.

PART VI.—PRACTICAL CONCLUSION.

1 COR. x. 15, 16, 17.

I speak as to wise men ; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ? For we being many are one bread, and one body ; for we are all partakers of that one bread.

THESE words require no further comment. They exhibit to us the Lord's supper, not more as an important part of divine worship, than as the consummation and compendium of the whole. Even this does not intimate the life and potency attributed to the great symbol of communion, by the philosophic apostle. Viewed in relation to the world of grace, it is a true microcosm, containing within itself the seminataive principle of godliness, while it displays the finished result. The acorn is at once the germ of the tree, and its last production; though when seen by the casual observer, as it hangs in bountiful profusion from its native bough, it may appear rather as a graceful appendage, than as the life-power of the whole. What, if on closer inspection, it should reveal to us, beneath its natural casings, the oak of the forest visibly depicted, fruit, leaves, and branches, disclosed within that narrow confine, in all the majestic beauty of their ultimate developement, and possible growth! Such is the Eucha-

rist, nay, more than this. We are taught to recognise in this, the most solemn exercise and office of our religion, not merely the plastic idea and regulative law of that holiness which it adumbrates and suggests,—the shaping prophecy and expansive model of that perfection which *may*, and if the dew of heaven, watering a happy soil, shall bless the labours of the cultivator, really *will* be progressively manifested; but the eternal, living reason, *who is not only in and through, but above, and independent of all*, the divine Person, Who “is before all things, and by Whom all things consist¹.” “Who, being the bright reflection of His Father’s glory, and the express image of His subsistence, yea, and upholding all things by the *word* of His power, when He had by Himself effected the purification of our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high². For even, as in baptism, we distinguish the existence of each person in the triune Godhead, so in sacramental communion, partaking in “the true bread which came down from heaven,” we acknowledge in the same act, the Father who gave, and the spirit who enlivens the gift. “For it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing³.”

Thus to the eye of faith, this holy symbol is, as it were, a mirror, bright and spotless, when looked *at*, with something of a dazzling lustre cast upon it from the sun of glory, but when looked *into*—a clear transparency, reflecting within its sacred cope, a pure ethereal region, peopled with angelic forms, and, lo! in the far depth the vision of Stephen, when “being full of the Holy Ghost, he looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God⁴.”

¹ Col. i. 17.

² John vi. 63.

³ Heb. i. 3.

⁴ Acts vii. 55.

Grant, blessed Lord, that we all with face unveiled, beholding in this glass, thy pure, essential glory, may, by the ministrations of thy Spirit, be transferred progressively into thine own likeness,—the image which we there discern.

If, however, the Saviour be thus sensibly imaged in the symbolic rite which He has appointed, then whatever terms are employed in Scripture to enunciate His attributes and offices, with a view to personal conviction, and practical duty, whatever figures or analogies the Spirit of revelation has been pleased to adopt in communicating with mortal infirmity, mild, and we may perhaps say, partial, yet divine reflections, from the central light of this heavenly system, itself a blinding vision, indiscernible by mortal eye,—these terms, these figures and analogies, thus graciously accommodated to the actual wants and faculties of man, may, with a like condescending reference, and with a like implied restriction, be properly translated to that holy sacrament, which *to the faithful*, is His body. It belongs, I say, to the *propriety* of this, the greater of the two representative rites of Christianity, to sail down the stream of time so freighted with Scriptural imagery, that the religion of the Word, as it appears in writing, and the religion of the Church, as it is carried on in service, may exhibit a constant and a visible correspondence. Can we contemplate the Saviour—can we look with faith upon His own appointed symbol—and fail to recognise both the mediating priest, and the atoning victim? Shall the heavenly truths, seen through these veiling figures, (as we dim the glass through which we view the sun,) shall this particular aspect of the truth be seen through any other medium, so surely, so affectingly, in a word, so well? And then, if the cup of

blessing which we bless,—if the sacred bread which we break, be indeed the *communion* of the body and blood of Christ;—if to partake of these be, through faith, to partake of Him whom they set forth, then (with reverence be it spoken) we are made conscious of the same two-fold character in our own persons. Or if this be deemed an ambiguous expression, we trace within ourselves a like two-fold operation, and Christ Himself, in the two-fold character, respectively corresponding. We are conformed, in Him, to the type of His self-oblation, and are thus “built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ¹.” Not offering again the Lord’s body, with most needless and most impious iteration, but celebrating that everlasting sacrifice, of which, in the person of Jesus, every believing man is the subject: participating through faith in the body of our passover, and as a practical consequence, “offering and presenting ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a holy, lively, and reasonable sacrifice unto God.”

It is possible, alas ! it is only too easy to confess the Saviour in words, and to deny Him in effect. I speak not so much of practical inconsistencies, as of the faith itself. This takes place, as on the one hand, when we evaporate the whole historic reality of His life and sufferings, and substitute for His adorable person, a mere philosophical idea, or ethical principle ; so, on the other hand, when we deny, or admit in nugatory forms of speech, which imply a negative, His real omnipresence and continuous energy in the world of man and nature, meaning nothing else by Jesus Christ but a mere historic personage,

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 5.

who lived and died, and revived in Palestine, with certain beneficial consequences to ourselves, some eighteen hundred years ago. Both of these heresies date almost from apostolic times, and both have their representatives in all countries at the present day¹. But in a general review, the first may be considered as characteristic of ancient, the second of modern times; and in protestant countries, the first of Germany, the second of this kingdom². In each of these extremes there is a principle of unbelief, and as far as this is concerned, the middle line between

¹ This never can be otherwise. That unbelievingness which is the faith of self-worship, in Scripture language, the evil *heart* of unbelief, is the same in both; and according as this idolatrous principle is determined to the intellectual or sensual parts of our nature, according as the idol, which takes the place of God, is set up in the pure intellect, or amid the appetites and affections, the first or second of these forms will prevail. Hence they may be regarded as opposite poles of the heretical principle itself, to one or other of which every particular heresy, from the highest flights of Gnosticism, to the lowest descent of Psilanthropism^a, will be found to incline. It will be replied, that the two were constantly united in ancient times: many of the Gnostics regarding Jesus as a mere man, and none of them acknowledging His full divinity. This is true,—but then Jesus, with these heretics, was not the Christ—not the Redeemer. Modern Unitarianism is the child of the modern mechanical

^a See *Aids to Reflection*, p. 151, note. Fourth edition.

philosophy, as is evident from the Arian leaning visible even in the most religious of its great promoters in this country. Not that there were not Sadducees and Epicureans of every shade in the ancient world, but the primitive Christians were not recruited from these disciples of experience. Those of Jewish origin were Pharisees, sometimes Philonists and Gnostics, while the Gentile converts, I speak of course of the learned only, were Platonists, or at least Platonicians, from the school of Porphyry and Plotinus^b. It will also be objected that Unitarians claim to be considered as the most intellectual of the Christian name, and are reproached with the pride of intellect, as the very source of their errors. This also is true. They deify the understanding, the servant of the senses, and ignore the reason, their rightful master. But this is the subject of a treatise, not of a note.

² See the appendix to Mr. Rose's *State of Religion in Germany*.

^b See BRUCKER, *Hist. Philosoph.* Vol. ii, 642,—iii. p. 278, seq.

them is drawn by pure infidelity. But that portion of the faith which is denied by the one, is strenuously asserted by the other. There is therefore a believing principle in each, determined exclusively to one of the two constituents of "the truth as it is in Jesus." In catholic christianity both are not merely combined, but so blended and united, that each lives and moves, and has its being in the other¹.

But catholic christianity consists essentially of the WORD and the SACRAMENTS. Neither can exist alone, without losing its proper virtue. Without the Word the Sacraments die, and stiffen into idolatry. Without the Sacraments, the written Word leads immediately to one of the two extremes above mentioned. It either reproduces itself from the pure intellect, as speculation: or it descends into the lower regions of sense and experience, and appears as history: or it is distracted between the two, and so becomes the parent of fanaticism,—a twy-

¹ Fanaticism, on the contrary, is a spurious compound of the two. Jesus Christ is, in the first place, a mere man,—a king, a captain, a friend, and brother,—sometimes a lover: (it is impossible even to allude to these extravagances without a painful sense of profaneness,) and in each of these characters is drest out in all the attributes of human nature, wholly unmodified by the co-presence of His divinity. Hence, as a natural consequence, He is addressed with aweless freedom, in the most unrestrained language of human affection. Yet, though a mere man, He has all the powers and attributes of the Godhead. He is not indeed properly omnipresent, which is precluded by the first requirement of such a creed, but He is indefinitely multiplied, and every

man has his own Jesus, *quantus quantus est*,—not in His divine and adorable infinitude, but in finite dimension and human lineaments, as drawn by fancy, and coloured by passion. It is lamentable to remember how much of this mischievous extravagance has found its way both into the Romish and Protestant Churches. In the ignorant and vulgar, it shows itself at once in all its native deformity; but when chastised by education, and the decency of cultivated manners, it often takes possession of the finest minds, depraving and unspiritualizing the most attractive and ingenuous piety. To receive with an enlightened faith, the sacrament of Christ's *spiritual* body, as administered by the Church of England, is to dissipate the illusions for ever.

formed monster, half matter, half spirit, unnaturally connected, but not combined; and this through the neglect of those visible ordinances which supply the required copula, binding together the earthly and the heavenly, the finite and the infinite, in one consistent whole. These remarks are intended to introduce a brief review of the doctrine exhibited in the preceding Sermons, as it bears practically upon the personal, social, and political life of men. If it be indeed the truth of God, as contained in Scripture, then we may be assured its tendency is to increase individual piety, to promote civil and domestic happiness, and to preserve the integrity and well-being of the nation. It would indeed have been highly improper to have assumed these as grounds of argument; first, because such a mode of investigating revealed truth is unlawful, and injurious to those divine oracles from which there is no appeal; secondly, because it is unsuitable, the absolutism of religious duty refusing to identify itself with such calculations; and lastly, because it is inadequate. It is not always possible to trace the cause as it works its way through the modifying influences of the world, to its phenomenal effect. We are sometimes required, as a trial of our faith, to persevere in an appointed course, much discredited by its apparent results, hoping for that we see not, and in patience waiting for it. Still these considerations are not without their use. They test the soundness of the conclusions which we have drawn from other premises, and supply an encouragement much needed in a disputative and incredulous age. Having then vindicated the catholic doctrine of the sacraments, on the ground that it is true,—revealed in Scripture, asserted by reason, and required by conscience; having shown, moreover, that the idea thus elicited is exactly

met by the fact, as collected from history, and still apparent at the present day, I shall now attempt still further to recommend it on the more popular ground that it is useful—I mean that it tends visibly to produce good fruits, both in individuals and in bodies—fruits of piety, enlightenment, love and peace.

And first, I take my stand upon the necessary connexion which I have shown to exist between the word and the sacraments; and from this point of view proceed to consider how the profitable reading of Holy Scripture is affected by my argument. The principle, be it remembered, which I have laboured to enforce, and which I am now about to apply, is no other than that enunciated by the apostle in my text. The communion, viz., of the body and blood of Christ, not as contemplated by the mere idealist, a bright but inaccessible *nebula*, sublimated from the earth on which we dwell, and floating in a thin atmosphere of thought, respirable only by a peculiar order of speculative minds; but as a living truth brought into common experience, as by all the other sensible media supplied in the visible Church, so especially by the cup of blessing and the broken bread of the great Eucharistic festival. If I am right in my views, this will, in practice, correct each of the extreme errors by which men are wont to make shipwreck of their faith. It will teach us to see the sacred theory of the Christian revelation in its historical facts, thus realizing the first by the second, and spiritualizing the second by the first.

And first, to touch for a moment on the less common but far from unfrequent error, the neglect of Christianity, as an outward fact. One man professes to receive with much respect the moral system of the Gospel, but is sceptical as to the history. The former he regards as a

correct expression of the common faith of mankind, and an admirable guide for the conduct of life and manners; but he looks upon the latter with complete indifference, even if he does not question its reality. Another takes a higher, if not a more religious view of the question. He sees in the page of Scripture all the first principles of metaphysical and psychological science, truths of the deepest concernment to the soul of man, revealed to the initiate in their essential glory, but from the vulgar, shrouded as of old, in visual forms; and whether these be substance or shadow, he deems of inferior moment. In short, he reads the Bible as a continuous parable, which *may* be history or fiction, or both, the doctrinal purpose being equally answered, whichever of these suppositions be adopted. The first of these is a man of the world,—a practitioner: the second is an idealist; yet they agree thus far in opinion, that they deny, or undervalue, the *historic* truth of the Gospel. We may therefore put the same question to both. How came such a system, either of practical ethics, or spiritual philosophy, to be contained in such a volume as the New Testament, a collection of small treatises, written by obscure authors, more or less independently of each other; yet all about the same time, and professedly under a common influence: treatises, preserved and authenticated by men notoriously unable themselves to have created any integral portion of their contents? Where, we may ask, did this system, so full of insight and fore-knowledge originate? how came it into this book? and why is it found nowhere else? Pausing

¹ I speak of the idea and combining principle of the Gospel. Grant this, and the truths which it makes known are detected every where,—withdraw this, and they are no longer cognizable. The world is an anxious question, of which the Bible is the divine and long-expected answer; the first utterance of which evoked a spirit

for a reply, if it be not at once returned in the words of truth and soberness, we may next point to the sacraments, the catholic liturgy, and successional ministry of the Church. Here we have the same divine truths visibly embodied before our eyes. Not only in Scripture, but in all the assemblies of the saints, in all lands, is the same wisdom spoken among the perfect. How has this happened? It is clearly not a mere repetition from Scripture, for it is referred to in Scripture itself as already existing, and long before the New Testament had acquired its present form and purpose, it is known to have been universal. Besides, though the Church and the Scriptures be strictly correspondent, we need not fear to say that they have each a peculiar character, and could not have been derived from each other. If it had been otherwise, if the Church had been constructed out of the Bible, or the Bible transcribed from the Church, one would have been superfluous. As it is, each supplies an independent evidence. I have already spoken of that furnished by Scripture, and the same remarks apply to the Church. When and how did this visibility begin? Again, but one answer is possible; it was so from the beginning. It is the continued existence of christianity as an historic

by which it is evermore and everywhere repeated. "Its sound is gone out into all lands, and its words unto the ends of the world^a." Let us beware of mistaking this echo, though heard in hill and vale, for the oracle itself. If not perpetually renewed it dies away, or mingles itself indistinguishably with other voices of unholy original, and most misleading import. The earth, as an ancient Sybil, sat

before her countless votaries, assembled in eager and impatient consultation at her secular shrine—mute, yet ever seeming to address herself to motion as she would speak. Only by a voice from heaven was that ominous silence broken. Then were the strings of her tongue loosed, and she was empowered to utter her inspiration—to take up that heavenly message and repeat it as her own.

^a Psalm xix. 4.

fact, and outward reality, recorded in Holy Writ¹. Thus much of the evidence, supplied by a sacramental

¹ It is by no means necessary, for this purpose, that we should be able to trace the succession of the Church through all its descents, in any one line. We may, or we may not be able to do this. But it is worse than needless to risk the argument on an historical investigation involving so much difficulty, and subject to so many doubts. That the Church has always been visible somewhere from the exact period assigned in Scripture, may indeed be shown positively by a series of documents to which no suspicion can attach. But even this is not necessary. The present existence of the Church *anywhere*, demonstrates its divine original, not *in* the written word, but *with* it, as a co-ordinate. This explains the phenomenon, and no other satisfactory account can be given. Its past existence for an *indefinite* period somewhere, repeats the proof, and the independent co-existence of many churches under the same circumstances multiplies it, but the idea is one and the same. Neither the Church nor the Scriptures *could* have been originated by man: because they both exhibit a truth which man could not find, though he sought it sorrowing, yet claimed as his own with joy, as soon as it was presented to him. In other words, the system of the Gospel could not have been invented by human wit, or realized by human power. We suppose an impossibility, when we add, that had this been the case, it would have been the most remarkable event in the history of the world—the circumstances the most noto-

rious, the agents the most conspicuous. But not a trace of either is discernible. It is *said* to have been revealed by Jesus Christ. This revelation we have both in the Scriptures and the Church, both in written documents and an outward constitution. But neither are these derived from each other; for though they exhibit it the same truth, they exhibit it in different manners, and throw a light upon each other which neither has alone. This shows in what sense the Church is “a pillar and ground of the truth,” as we are taught by St. Paul^a, and again, “a keeper and witness of Holy Writ,” as we read in our own articles: a doctrine which may be firmly believed and dearly cherished without attributing infallibility either to Pope, to Council, or to Synod. On the other hand, it gives to the legal decisions of the great Christian body, a sanction, corresponding to their real universality; claims for the pastorate in their official capacity as interpreters of the divine oracles, a certain deference defined in each case by moral considerations, not easy to be reduced to rules, but occasioning no perplexity to the conscience; throws open the volume of inspired and inspiring truth, while it asserts that “no Scripture is of private interpretation;” and hallows the exercise of private judgment, by informing it with a religious principle, while it is converted from a snare into a privilege, by being determined to a given field.

^a 1 Tim. iii. 15.

worship, to the historic truth of Christianity. And what a boon is this ! How necessary as a safeguard ! What, though the vessel of our faith be riding in seeming security in the spacious haven of spiritual knowledge, with our native land of hope and promise lying around us, and the towers of the new Jerusalem full in sight, shall we break loose from the deeply embedded anchors that fix us to our actual place till it be time to go ashore ? Are there no gusts of passion, no ebbs and flows of popular opinion, no shifting currents of individual speculation, to apprehend ? What if we be hurried forward in unchecked impatience, are there no hidden shoals ? Is it safe to approach *too* near ? And oh ! what if we be driven back into the open sea of doubt !

But it is time to turn our thoughts to the other, and far more numerous class of Scripture students. Are there not multitudes who read the Bible as a faithful record of the past, without so much as a suspicion that it is also a revelation of the present,—the daily present of every man's actual life and being ? Let me explain.

We will suppose the history of Jesus Christ as He appeared on earth, in human form, to be duly studied and fully believed. His actions to be regarded as most exemplary, His lessons most instructive, His character most sublime. Nay, we will grant that the doctrines of His divinity and meritorious atonement are cordially and gratefully accepted. Thus much, by the mercy of God, thus much of "the truth as it is in Jesus," has ever been received by the great majority of our English congregations. And if we add to this the duty of remembering the Saviour's life with affectionate reverence, and of imitating by divine grace, such parts of His conduct as are imitable, we shall have drawn a favourable picture of the

religious belief entertained by a large portion, and that the best of what is called the Christian public. Do I then pronounce this necessarily insufficient? Far from it. As held in very many, it contains, I doubt not, an implicit confession of the deeper and more affecting faith for which I am contending. But it is not expressed, or made an object of conscious meditation, and therefore a place is left open for many plausible, but false opinions, invented to link together what appear to be different and widely separated truths, though in fact they are but different manifestations of the same divine principle.

To speak plainly, by thus contemplating the person of the Redeemer exclusively in the past, a barrier is thrown between Him and His earthly worshipper. He is beheld afar off, commanding, promising, suffering for us and for all mankind,—*there, and then*. But we are *here and now*. And between there is a great gulf of time and space. That this separation has long been felt in various ways by all classes of the religious community, can, I think, admit of no question. It has occasioned a certain coldness and formality in our Christian devotions, against which the public voice, never wholly silent, has now, for some time, borne loud and united testimony. Hence, in the re-action, now all but universal, but which has always been going on to a certain extent, both in the Church and out of it, those sad perversions of our most holy faith, which “we have seen with our eyes, and of which our fathers have told us.” For the religious principle once awakened, becomes a necessity in our nature; and if not happily developed, is sure to produce some unfortunate misgrowth, the sign and punishment of a morbid taint in the constitution. Now the fanatic, as I have said, overleaps all obstacles with dauntless intrepidity, if, by any

means he may come into the presence of the divine Saviour; but with earthly and unhallowed feelings, forgetting that our intercourse and familiarity with the man was, from the moment of His ascension, taken up and absorbed in our communion with the God. Better fall on our knees with Peter, and say, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man," than confront our Almighty Redeemer with such irreverent self-exalting boldness: better the shrinking timidity of conscious guilt, than an audacious confidence, shameless and groundless in the same proportion. Better, and more hopeful, though such an emotion marks the alien and the prodigal, not the reconciled child of God. Blest in believing that which we *cannot* see, and *must* not fancy, let our communication be that of the awe-struck Thomas, "MY LORD and my God'."

Neither is it sufficient to contemplate the Saviour as in heaven, waiting to rejoin His faithful followers, though this be "a truth most worthy of all men to be received." Alas! if He were there *alone*, so far from His earthly brethren, how should He truly mediate between their fallen nature, and the ineffable God? Or if we deem the

¹ We are by no means to suppose that these extravagances are peculiar to the Churches of Protestantism. The same sickly sentimentalism, the same wild and unlicensed dreaming, the same repulsive familiarity, have nestled in the convent, and roamed with the wandering friar, have raved from the pulpit, and whispered at the confessional, not only unrestrained, but undiscouraged—nay, fostered by the papacy, as an engine of unholy power, from the first establishment of the system. And from the same cause. Wherever Christ is in effect removed from

the conscious faith of mankind, whether by an outward idol, or by a shadowy comfortless notion, His place will be filled in the yearning hearts of His people by some phantastic image, fabricated by themselves out of the materials of their own affections, something which they may hope to love, and with which they may be able to converse. But this is idolatry, whether it kneel before the shrine of our Lady, chanting the gentle orisons of a delusive piety, or bellow in the midnight conventicle, "filling the air with barbarous dissonance."

mode of His intercession too obscure to beget a reasonable question, has He not said that He would not leave us orphans?—that He would come to us¹?

In truth, our blessed Lord both *was* on earth in the humble form of a servant, and *is* in heaven crowned with majesty and honour. Not the less, He is with His faithful worshippers *here*; “The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above²;)” as if He were in heaven alone. “Or who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead³;)” as if His living presence on earth had ceased at his death. “But what saith it? The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach⁴.” So speaks the apostle, and we all profess to receive his doctrine, if we only knew how to substantiate it in our lives. But how spake the Lord Himself? How has he empowered the Church to speak? *This is my body!* Oh! the inexpressible comfort, the deep, deep assurance contained in these solemn words, when received into the heart by faith. They bring before us our blessed Saviour, not in the past

¹ Both these forms of belief, either singly or combined, are of themselves essentially unitarian; that is, they exclude *in effect* the divine nature of Christ. I do not, of course, mean that this heresy is professed, but that it is involved in the creed. That the presence and agency of the Godhead are recognised both in the outer world and in the mind of man, and is *called* Christ, leaves the question as it found it. This faith was held in substance by the wiser heathen, (witness the *animus magnus et*

sacer of Seneca,) not to say by Jews and Christians of every age and sect. It is the everlasting and most real presence of God in Christ, the Word incarnate, which constitutes “the great mystery of godliness,”—the precious truth to which the sacrament of the Lord’s supper bears perpetual witness. “This do,” said the Lord Himself, “in remembrance of ME,” your Emmanuel.

² Rom. x. 6.

³ Rom. x. 7

⁴ Rom. x. 8.

alone, our bright example,—not in heaven alone, our glorious hope,—but here on earth, here substantially present, though not in human form, to be “*verily and indeed received by the faithful*” in that holy communion which we solemnize in our assemblies, that we may learn what spirit we are of, and assert our true position in the world of grace.

Here then is a second practical use in the Lord’s supper, the importance of which it would be impossible to over-estimate. Let this sacrament be once restored to its full signification, as set forth in our Liturgy, let it be received with an awakened intelligence, and with earnest faith, and all the formality, all the coldness of our service is revived as by a torch of fire. We see Christ, not, on the one hand, as a mere speculation, nor on the other as the creature of the sensuous imagination, but as our own immortal life, “*very nigh us, and in our hearts,*” where we “*feed on Him by faith with thanksgiving*’.”

¹ A secondary benefit which may be hoped from the better understanding of sacramental doctrines, may here be mentioned, as immediately connected with the above; its tendency to preserve the unity of the National Church, more particularly at the present crisis. Let but the people be convinced that they *have* the communion of the body and blood of Christ, in the manner expressly stated by the apostle; that they have it in the Church of their fathers, unto which they were born, and through the medium of her scriptural and traditional ministrations; let the doctrine be propounded to all men freely and fully, as they are able to bear it, not as a startling novelty, nor

merely as the revival of an outworn and forgotten tenet, but as the expansion of their own forms of thought and modes of speech, in so far as these are borrowed from Holy Writ, or quickened by a conscientious principle, making use of all the holy truths, however scattered and disconnected, which are interwoven in the popular creed, as so many monitors to point the way to another truth in which they are all included, and of which the Church sacraments are the proper exponents, instituted by Christ Himself; let them but see the comfort, strength, and holiness, the oblivion of past guilt, the subjugation of present sin, and the necessary renovation of life presupposed in a real union with the

And here I meet an objection which may possibly be raised against these views, that they throw discredit on the first principle of the Reformation, "the sufficiency of

Son of God; in a word, let the eucharistic mystery be preached, not as a drug, to lull the conscience to a torpid sleep, but as a stimulus the most powerful that can be applied to reasonable, that is, to intellectual *and* spiritual creatures; let but this course be pursued, humbly and consistently, in a spirit of prayer and self-distrust, yet with boundless devotion to our sacred cause, and undoubting reliance on Him by whom it will be upheld; and the Church in England has nothing, the Church of England but little to apprehend.

The convert to that apostate Church, now rousing itself, as if for a last struggle, into perilous activity, seeks a more tangible assurance, a more immediate presence of divine truth. He knows not what he leaves; he has not been taught to feel that the Mediator is brought into immediate contact with the soul, in those catholic ministrations, of which he may often have partaken, but which he never can have known. To assert this precious privilege, is still indeed a work of faith, and a spiritual act, demanding an exercise of the will, itself impossible except by grace; but surely it must be seen, that "whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil."

That body, on the other hand, whether in the Church or out of it, which usurps to itself the title of evangelical, (due to many of their number as a just description, but most objectionable as a dis-

tinctive name,) are swayed by the very same impulse. They want to be brought into a closer nearness to the Redeemer; and this in respect both of inward and of outward righteousness. They object to forms, as standing between the man and his God, or they undervalue them as having no essential office in the economy of grace. Let them but read the consecration prayer in the Communion Service; let them but integrate the symbol, and so possess themselves of the entire mystery, with all the assurance derivable from the co-presence of an objective reality, with the corresponding truth within; let them, in a word, but see the spiritual essence revealing itself in an outward exponent, *bearing the seal of Christ*, and the outward exponent transfigured into the spiritual essence, *bearing the seal of the Holy Ghost*; and never, never will they desert the Lord's table, or hope to find it where it has not been spread, or trust to a mimic sacrament, stamped with no signet but their own; no, nor tamper in any way with the heavenly system of which it forms a part, either by arbitrary omissions, incongruous admixtures, or unworthy aids. But if there be any of that class whom I am now addressing, to whom nothing of this applies, (and there are many,) let them drop all distinctive appellations, by which they are *not* distinguished, and rejoin the great congregation. Let them call themselves Christians, churchmen, ca-

the holy Scriptures for salvation'." But this it is my leading object to support. I have undertaken to investigate within a certain range, "the *scriptural* character of the English Church." Touching slightly on those *outward* marks by which the coincidence of the visible Church in this country, with the Church of Christ as founded by the apostles, is established, (not as undervaluing this line of argument, but because it has been pre-occupied throughout, by recent writers of far greater learning and better opportunities,) I have endeavoured to evince the true, if not perfect correspondence, existing between *the plan*, as contained in the New Testament, (explained by, and explaining the Old,) and *the edifice* actually reared before our eyes in our own land. Not as if this plan had been laid down by the sacred writers in length, and breadth, and height, so as to be transferable by sensible admeasurement. Something of this is, indeed, to be discerned, sufficient to identify the superstructure with the foundation, as parts of the same whole; but by no means intended to anticipate all the future stages of the building. It is the fundamental idea of Christian truth, variously set forth and elucidated in the sacred record, which I have maintained to be imaged, with edifying clearness, in the ministerial and sacramental scheme, which I have applied myself more particularly to vindicate. But if this correspondence be essential to the support of the Church; if, wanting *this* character, it is still indeed a

tholics, as opposed to heathens, sectaries, and heretics, always remembering, that to be a catholic in England is *not* to be a *Romanist*, who, whatever he may once have been, or may still be in other lands, in this country is both a heretic and a schismatic, carrying

on an aggressive warfare, with heterodoxy and disunion written on his banners. In other words, he comes to break up whatever union he finds established, and to assert falsehood in opposition to the truth.

¹ Art. vi.

temple, but of idols, its altar desecrated, and its candlestick removed, it is not less necessary for the due appreciation and right understanding of holy Scripture. Not only do we recognise in this comparison, the inestimable value of Scripture as a witness for the Church, but we magnify the office of the Church, principally as a witness for Scripture; a witness not only testifying to the divinity of the written word, but pointing out its proper use, and providing a condition under which it may be thrown wide open, with perfect safety, and with universal benefit. So long as a scriptural Church is amongst us in becoming prominence, to exhibit with silent, but most impressive demonstration, the general character of revealed truth, the sacred volume may and must have free course amongst the people: the substantive forms and legitimate influences of the first, so guiding the free interpretation of the second, as to realize all the good, without any of the evil attributable to this high privilege. Not that individuals will always improve the precious talent thus committed to their use. It is expressly intended to try our responsibility, and make our service reasonable. But proper and sufficient helps and safeguards are provided, co-extensive in operation with the need and the danger. The holy Book comes to us unrestricted, but not alone: it is placed in our hands by a monitress, ever at hand and watchful, not to dictate its meaning, but to suggest and recommend it. Hence, this heavenly boon, though still liable to abuse, becomes on this supposition an unmingled blessing. On the other hand, let the Church be ever so little set aside, and we are quickly taught by experience how far it is from the Saviour's will, that one of His gifts should be seized, and the other rejected. I count, therefore, the free circulation of the

Bible, and the unshackled, though not undirected, judgment of individuals upon its sacred contents, to be one of the many blessings secured to us, by the permanent visibility and independence of the Christian Church. Now this effect is due, not wholly or principally to the superior opportunities enjoyed by the clergy, both for acquiring and communicating scriptural knowledge,—for this, though an important, is a variable co-efficient in the general product,—but much more, to the standing exposition afforded by the necessary structure of the Church itself: by all those perpetual observances, therefore, fraught as they are with scriptural meaning, which mark its apostolic original, but most of all by its sacramental liturgy.

This is the general position. But with respect to the particular view which I have taken of the Lord's Supper, will the comfortable assurance, which I have shown to be afforded by this holy institution, supersede the study of holy Writ? Will men resign themselves passively to the influences of an external religion, and think that all is done? It is to counteract so fatal a delusion without doing violence to the sacred economy, which we have received from our Lord and His apostles, without breaking up the long descended symbols of unity, on which the saints of God have set their seals in a perpetual succession, that this volume has been written. Its practical aim throughout is to show the possibility of a *voluntary* submission, and an *enlightened* teachableness; to prove that spiritual reciprocity and spiritual activity are interdependent; in other words, that we must "work out our own salvation, for it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do." I have defined religion, as the meeting and union of an outward revelation exhibiting the free gift of God with the reason, will, and conscience of man. Now

although both the sacraments and the Scriptures are to be regarded as objective realities coming to, and not proceeding from, the human mind, yet the office of the Church is, in the first, to administer the heavenly grace, which we are to receive as a gift, while, with the second, she unfolds to us the conditions under which it may be made available. In other words, the worth of the sacrament is derived from the mystery which it involves, and which, when unexplained by Scripture, it rather hides than makes known. We need the Bible then to make us truly value the Church.

But we may go much further. I contend that a new life, an added warmth is imparted to the reading of Scripture by sacramental doctrines, to which no language can do justice. Is the mystic fire which burns invisibly upon God's spiritual altars, revealed to each individual by the written Word? (kindled it is from heaven, but re-enkindled for every man through the act of his own spirit;) well does that sacred flame repay the debt, by the light and heat which it throws back upon the spirit-breathing page of God's written revelation. For what is the mystery of which we thus become cognizant, which we can only feel in knowing, only know in being divinely, sacramentally taught to feel? "*This is my body*,"—the communion of my flesh and blood! Oh! shall we not return from that mystic table to feed upon the same incarnate Word, through an awakened conscience now brought to bear upon all the acts of a renovated life, and all the passions of its particular tenement? Shall not the eternal Godhead be discerned by us in everything that is made,—all creatures, all outward nature, becoming instinct with love and power, and this visible order, this beautiful world, a monument of Him by whom it is

redeemed? But above all, shall we not experience a like revival of our faith in the record of His *manifested* life, and earthly sojourn? Assured of the communion of His body, can I dare to say with what awe-inspiring enlightenment, or again, with what deep humiliation, or again, with what reverential love and thanksgiving we shall claim kindred with the Man of sorrows, seeing Him to be our own, as we follow his steps in the Gospel narrative? How shall we note the minutest incident, the slightest action of the divine Person, whom we recognise in so high and pregnant a sense, as our example? With what burning hearts shall we not listen to His words'?

But are there not other thoughts, it will be asked, that temper this exulting strain? Is there not another law in our members, still at war with the law of the inward man, the new and divine nature, to whom that heavenly manna, with all the heavenward aspirations which it nourishes, exclusively appertains? If so, is it *comfort* only that we need? And not first humiliation, warning, chastisement? Alas! yes. If we would rejoice in the Lord always, we must also suffer with Him awhile. The Christian, like his blessed Master, passes through patience to glory, though in our actual pilgrimage these two states are often interchanged, and now we ask, in trembling anxiety, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" and again are enabled "to thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," in the glad assurance that "there is now no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus." "Not," however, "as if we had already attained," or were already perfect; but forgetting things behind, we press forward. Meanwhile there is much to be done, and much to be endured.

' Luke xxiv. 32.

The Christian, let us be assured, is always tried. This may be conceived of outward or of inward temptations: afflictions sent from God, and persecution for Christ's sake; or the rebellion of an evil nature, prostrate but not destroyed. What if these be but different aspects of the same fact? What if grief be nothing else in itself but the plague of sin made manifest? We think too little of the enemy with whom we have to combat; and whom not *we*, but Christ alone can quell: and not Christ away and elsewhere, such is not His will; but very nigh us, and in our hearts. Most true it is that "when we were yet afar off Christ died, the just for the unjust, to bring us near unto God." Most true it is that the Saviour's voluntary passion, the proof and consequence of His incarnation, and thus to follow the cause to its effect, of His vital union with every believing man, anticipates the least movement on our parts, and in some sort completes the death of sin; that is, when personally appropriated, it is all-effectual to this end: for death is not yet swallowed up in victory. But how is this appropriation to be effected? Must not Christ be brought near to us by faith, or rather revealed in our hearts, to be on our side, and fight our battles there? And is this mere shadow play?

Let no man deceive us with vain words. The death of sin is not accomplished without pain. Ask the Lord's faithful servants everywhere, ask the saintly confessor in whatever school of religious belief he may have been trained, and he will tell you what his struggles with the peccant nature which he inherits have cost him. These pains, these efforts, the agony of a repentant soul—what do they show? Are they not the throes of a mysterious sympathy with the bleeding Christ, who died that

we might live,—the strength, the merit, the ineffable pleading of the Spirit whom He has sent, all Christ's,—the sin with its attendant smart, the working of death within us, all our own,—the manifestation of an evil nature thus in man rebelling, thus through Christ subdued? We think too little of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and hence we think too little, or not aright, of those stripes with which we are healed. Oh! if there be one lure by which the consciences of men are more fatally inveigled than by another, it is by the notion that the redemption wrought for them by the Saviour takes its divine effect *out of themselves*,—that it is accomplished either by a mere historic fact, which we read of in the Bible, believe to have happened, and so believing, make effectual to our salvation; or, on the other hand, by the *opera operata* of an outward service, whether Church ministrations, works of piety, or bodily penance¹.

¹ Of the first of these I have already spoken. Understood as signifying and sealing a true, voluntary, spiritual act of the recipient himself, they are of inappreciable value. "Mixed with faith," they become substantial, and realize the presence of Christ in the soul. Apart from this, they are mere jugglery, of a piece with masses, indulgences, bead-prayers, reliques, crossings, creepings, pilgrimages, and the like.

Of the second, a Protestant, I had almost said a Christian, can entertain but one opinion. Our acceptability depends not at all on what we *do*, but wholly upon what we *are*; that is, upon what we are made by Christ, upon our state. Yet this infallibly reveals itself in our outward life; while conversely,

"good works performed in faith," assert, and thus far establish our state.

Of the last I am led to speak particularly in relation to my present subject. Looked upon simply as *prudential*, it is clear that bodily self-denials have a sphere of usefulness. The authority of St. Paul appears conclusive on this point, if indeed it be not self-evident. They are consequently within the province of a Church to ordain. They will be imposed by every sincere believer on himself conscientiously, in proportion to his need; and may, though not without great caution, be recommended in general terms to others. But the moment they pass this line, the moment they are regarded as in any degree meritorious, or con-

But while I reject and reprobate these outward substitutes, do I insinuate that the *inward* sufferings of the believer are in any way the cause or special instruments of his salvation? Far from it. Christ is the cause,—faith the condition or medium of our safety, as St. Paul declares, “By grace are ye saved, through *faith*,” “which *works* by love;”—so that *every* act done in faith, (and patient endurance is itself an act,) may in some sort be regarded as an instrument employed by the Spirit in the process of sanctification;—without which, to what end are we justified? Prayers, sacraments, charitable deeds, obedience to our heavenly Father’s will—these we know carry with them an especial blessing; and who shall affirm that penitent tears may not be rendered *mediately* influential in washing out the stain of guilt—Christ conveying to them this virtue, by His Spirit, as signs and fruits of the faith from which they spring. But it is not of this that I speak¹.

I wish not simply to admit, but to insist, with the fourth Article, that “we are accounted righteous before God only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus

tributive in themselves, to the death of sin, they become not only vain, but idolatrous and sinful. “*By grace* are we *saved*, through faith, and that not of ourselves.” To regard the flesh, the material pulp itself, as an evil nature which must be bruised and macerated, that it may release the spirit which it holds entangled, and so permit it to pursue its divine operations unimpeded, what is this but the dark Manichæan heresy vulgarized and reduced to practice? Surely it is the carnal *will*, itself a spirit, *φρόνημα σαρκὸς*, the *mind* of the

flesh which is enmity against God. Rom. viii. 7.

¹ This is not a distinction without a difference. While we recognise Christ as the sole cause, and faith as the indispensable condition of our well-being, it is an encouragement suitable to our present state to be assured that our good works are a *medium* through which grace is imparted, and the joy of heaven won. “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord.” Matt. xxv. 23. If faith be the *life* of action, then action is the *form* of faith.

Christ, and not for our own works and deservings ;” these merits being transferred to us, in full tale, without let or diminution, by faith alone ; but then I hold with the ninth Article, that the infection of our fallen nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated, whereby the lust of the flesh is not subject to the law of God. Now this is a state under which we cannot enjoy perfect repose. A rest, we are told, *remaineth* for the people of God, but it is not yet attained. Hence a perpetual contest. And the pains and sorrows with which this is attended, however they may be made by the divine blessing, instrumental in carrying on the conflict, I notice in this connexion, simply as setting forth the deadly nature of sin, and the character of that resistance through which it is to be overcome. Can we suppose that when the Saviour required His disciple to deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Him, He spoke exclusively of outward hardship, and not much more of the broken and contrite heart—the pains to which the body of sin is naturally subject, and from which *we* cannot be wholly relieved till *it* be wholly abolished ? Does not St. Paul himself instruct us to “glory in tribulation” as a state of holy discipline ?

And is not this lesson taught us in the great paschal mystery ? Is it not a sacrifice which we there commemorate and make our own ? Are we not there expressly admonished, and through faith, (asserting our part in the suffering Lamb,) divinely enabled to crucify our sinful lusts, that we may at length present ourselves a self-oblation, holy, and acceptable unto the Lord ?

So shall we trace the Saviour, tearful and bleeding, through type and prophecy, a stricken lamb, a man of sorrows, till we come to the foot of the cross, there to rest

awhile; not as if He were not to revive and ascend to heaven, nor as if the ever-blessed *effects* of that awful passion were not to be made our own through faith, but that we may truly know what the burden is which we throw down there. Then, when we know ourselves to be crucified with Christ, we may boldly declare that we live in Him.

After this shall it be said, that the use of sacraments leads to formalism? That they induce an undue reliance on outward means, and thus eventually supplant the very realities which they are supposed and intended to support? Freely must we avow, and carefully remember, that the most precious gifts of God are precisely those which are most liable to misuse and perversion. The food on which we live is the occasion of gluttony and disease; the medicines by which we are healed, in the hands of the unskilful or malicious become deadly poison. Rightly used, the mysterious ordinances of the Church are not to be regarded as substitutes for that grace which they indicate, and which, when "mixed with faith" in the recipient, they actually procure. They are means, not ends; and when thus used, they shed a gracious influence over the whole life, perpetuating, as it were, the solemn act of celebration in its permanent effect. Thus the use of baptism is not to inspire the Christian with such confidence in his regenerate state, as to supersede the necessity of further means and continued exertion. Rather, when he contrasts his apparent state,—the weakness under which he still faints, the sins with which he is still encumbered, the guilt and condemnation to which the natural man is still subject, and he himself in so far as he is yet carnal,—when he contrasts this, his apparent and actual state, with the high privileges and arduous duties

to which he is introduced by baptism, he is only *not* driven to despair. He *is* regenerate; of this he is sacramentally assured, that is to say, he has God's word for it. Here is a ground of hope, the moment it is accepted as such. Begin when he will, come to himself when he may, this divine change must still have preceded. But "be ye transformed in the renewing of your minds," is still a command imperative upon those who have been born again of water and the Spirit, and in fact upon these alone. The change of which baptism is the seal and token, must be perpetually renewed. Here then is a ground of prayer, of humiliation, and of spiritual earnestness, not without emotions of serious alarm. He begins to work out his salvation *with fear and trembling*. And again, is it only at the Lord's table that we are to seek communion with the Head of the Church, and our fellow-members? Nay, the solemn act to which we are then parties, is but a prominent and representative instance of that ceaseless intercourse, which every religious duty serves, in its degree, to promote and cherish,—the ground of all faith, the object of all hope, the occasion of all charity; an instance, however, on which God Himself has set His seal, that the assurance which He alone can give, conveyed in that holy rite, as by an authentic instrument, may send us on our way rejoicing,—prepared to dwell with our Lord always,—to communicate with our brethren in all things,—to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,—and make of life itself a perpetual Eucharist.

And will this lull the conscience to a false peace? will not the contradictions, observable between our actual walk and the life which we live in the flesh, in so far as it is by the faith of the Son of God, rather tend to

awaken us from the sleep of death, while we see before us the terrors of the Lord, and look forward to the fearful prospective of final reprobation? Will not baptismal privileges neglected, the Lord's body not distinguished, the temple of the Holy Ghost profaned, will not the consciousness of these offences scatter our supine reliance on outward means, as the mists of night before the morning breeze? say rather, as the exhalations of a pestilent marsh before the cleansing whirlwind? Will not these words of the apostle set themselves in array before us: "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame¹."

Thus, if in weighing this soul-concerning matter, we hold the scales of the sanctuary with an unsteady hand, the tongue of the balance is as likely to incline to one side as the other, and the sacraments be regarded as ministers of despair, rather than as messengers of hope. But we "account that the long-suffering of our Lord is *salvation*²." Again, we hear ourselves invited to receive these solemn pledges of divine mercy; and in so doing to renew our own vows, and enter, as it were, afresh into covenant with our God. Again, we hear ourselves commanded and encouraged to "put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of our mind;" and so to "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness³."

¹ Heb. vi. 4—6.² 2 Pet. iii. 15.³ Eph. iv. 22—24.

And we know that this precept could not be addressed to us, if the ground of our renovation were not already within us,—if the means of our renovation were not still accessible. So may we hope to grow in grace, being gradually perfected with the saints, our brethren, through that work of the ministry, by which the body of Christ is edified, till “we come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ’.

¹ Eph. iv. 13.

NOTE TO SERMON XVIII.

ON TRADITION AND EPISCOPAL SUCCESSION.

SEMLER in his *Ecclesiastical History*, speaking of the Christian Church in the second century, has the following remark: —“ Exstiterunt autem hic ibi (*Alexandriæ, Romæ*) scholæ, ut aliorum philosophorum; et presbyteri Christianam doctrinam tradebant eo modo, qui a philosophorum more non multum abhorrebat. Hinc *μυστηρίων* disciplina, et discrimen *ἐξωτέρων*, catechumenorum, et *ἐσωτέρων*; hac ratione igitur pro audientium indole et consilii exsequendi opportunitate non solum docendi modus fuit liber, sed et doctrinarum non una aut simillima descriptio; non erat externa auctoritas, quæ consensum imperaret. Eligebant, quod videbatur maxime *λογικόν, χρησιμὸν γνωστικόν*.”

This “heterodox theologian,” by concealing half the fact falsifies the whole. If there were no external authority in the second century, and such a variety of doctrine as is here intimated, the Church must have sadly declined from the state in which it was left by St. Paul¹; and we may indeed be grateful to the third and fourth centuries for recalling Christianity to the scriptural

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 16, 23; xiv. 33. 1 Tim. iii. 15. Gal. i. 8. If the flock be bound in conscience to obey their pastor^a, the pastor is similarly circumstanced with regard to his bishop, that is to the entire Church: else we should have a

^a Heb. xiii. 17.

pope, not merely in every diocese, but in every parish. Catholicity without a fixed pastorate is a mere dream, a latent potency, which would not be latent if it really existed. A pastorate without an external catholicity, would be an aggregation of petty tyrannies, and

standard, and replacing the Church on the foundation of the prophets and apostles. But whatever freedom of discipline may have prevailed, (and, doubtless, all the resources of the human mind were brought to bear upon the Christian scheme, both at its first promulgation, and at this early period of its establishment,) the mode in which the judgment of the Church was formed must have been far different from that here described.

Add to Semler's three measures *παράδοτον*, and *καθολικὸν*, or rather place them first. They delivered first of all that which they had received, explaining and recommending, but not inventing or selecting the doctrines which they taught, by all the lights with which a gracious Providence had supplied them, by an appeal to reason and conscience, by considerations of moral and political expediency, and by that refined spiritual analysis which, under proper guidance, transcribed the Book of God in letters of light, and gave to the outer walls of the sanctuary the translucence of crystal, but which, when released from the "*external authority*," by which the great body of believers were guided, passed, not gradually, but by a sudden leap, into a bold, an impious, an heretical, and most extravagant cabbala. Thus much of simple tradition.

Subsequently, as the distance from the fountain-head increased, and the separate rills into which the main stream was divided, began to exhibit a variety of appearance,

<p>every congregation an independent state, like the Attic <i>demes</i> before they were confederated by Theseus —always at war with each other, and a prey to every foreign invader. The first is a government without an executive, that is, an anarchy. The second is an executive without a parliament, that is, a despo-</p>	<p>tism. I have spoken of parishes, but the same reasoning applies to dioceses, or patriarchates. A recognised catholicity is the only condition of freedom. It is the <i>punctum indifferens</i> between authority and independence — in popular language, the happy mean between slavery and licence.</p>
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arguing a difference of quality, they extended the sphere of their observation. They instituted a general comparison. That which was peculiar to each was rightly deemed a mark of impurity; the genuine characteristics must be common. Hence the golden rule so neatly worded by the good monk of Lirins, "Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus." This then is catholic tradition.

But this is itself an *idea*. Absolute universality is, indeed, a measure of absolute truth, and has often been cited in evidence by heathen philosophers, to prove the existence of an unseen power, and a future state of being. We may add that it bears full testimony to the fall of man, and to the Noachic deluge. But how? Shall we pretend to arrive either at the great doctrines and historical facts, adumbrated in the traditional worship, the legendary annals, and primitive philosophy of all ancient nations by eliminating whatever is peculiar, and retaining only that which is universal? Will a single shred of the original fabric remain after the process? Shall we trace any one outline of the prototype, however slight in all its representatives?

Yet having in our minds the original type, from which all these most imperfect copies are taken, we discern the resemblance in each, and are convinced of its existence, not as an idea alone, but as an outward and substantive reality. From what original this type is itself derived, whether from tradition or direct revelation, whether from within or from without; whether it have been already laid up, as a recognised possession, in the mind, and only wait to be applied, or be discovered, so to speak, in the process of investigation,—awakened, as from a long sleep, we know not how, when to our own surprise and, I need not say, delight, we find the chaos of outward facts

reduced to order and harmony,—this is another question. In every case, if it be a matter of conscience, we add to our faith, knowledge; if not, it may be better to say, that we make our anticipations certain.

Now this is precisely what was required by the early Church, or, indeed, by the Church at all times. They were in possession of the type,—not a slumbering idea buried in the deep recesses of the heart, beneath the crumbling ruins of humanity, not “the desire of all nations” yearning with unsatisfied impatience for the coming of Jesus,—but a clear outward revelation, unreservedly accepted, if not fully received, and thus having both an objective and subjective reality in every Christian congregation through the world.

Now I by no means affirm that “the form of doctrine,” “once delivered to the saints,” is absolutely unable to propagate itself by simple tradition; reason and conscience continually re-asserting the truth in the minds of men, and thus *tending* to preserve its outward and embodied representations; especially when it has wrought out for itself a channel with fixed banks, in which to take its historical course; and when to that inherent potency by which its visible character is determined, the pressure of outward circumstances is added, and the gentle compulsion of habit: nay, I will never deny, nor doubt that the power of divine truth having been once experienced, whether in the mind of an individual, or in that of a nation, (which by the interlinking of its generations, if in no other way, preserves both a moral and intellectual personality,) *tends* to heal its own wounds, and repair its own losses; for to this, the native elasticity of the truth, we must attribute the first effort of the Reformation: and who shall presume to say how far under the influence

of the Spirit this re-enlightenment might be carried? But, alas! how many counter-influences are constantly at work! how fatally the world and the flesh co-operate with the mysterious power of the evil one, first, to chill the love, and then to dim the vision of God's pure and spiritual word; and then, though the truth itself be immutable, its outward symbol, the Church, loses a portion of its vitality, which is immediately supplied by the ever active spirit of falsehood. Gradually, but quickly, "the form of its countenance is changed." The halo which marked its heavenly origin, fades from its brow, and a coronet of earthly splendour takes its place. And if we take the course of time into the account, to recur to the metaphor employed above, the banks which confined the stream within its proper bed imperceptibly give way, its course is altered, yet wears the appearance of an undeviating sameness; and then the same influences which once gave fixedness to the truth, are no less effectual to give permanence to error.

Thus have I shown that notwithstanding the natural tendency of revealed truth to assert its own outward existence, this is liable to be overborne by the opposing forces of the world, and actually does give way almost immediately, whenever it is left to itself. Let us now inquire what correctives have been provided by God's providence to remedy an evil, by which, if unresisted, His merciful purposes would be not simply thwarted, but insuperably barred. First in time is that catholic comparison of which I have spoken above. Each particular Church compared its own *παράδοτον*, with the traditions of other Churches. Now if the golden rule had been *literally* applied,—if nothing had been retained but that which was held everywhere, always, and by all,—it is

quite clear that the substance of the faith must have been given up, article by article, till the whole was annihilated: for every Gospel truth was confronted at its first appearance by a particular heresy; and to except the heretics is to beg the question. The object was to ascertain who these were. Yet the presence of one common type was to be detected in each, to which they are all more or less conformed, and from which they all more or less varied; for we are not to suppose that the seal of God's truth left a *perfect* impression anywhere. This common type is the *καθολικόν*, rightly deemed the original; and those copies the most authentic which most nearly correspond to it. Thus we see that this famous maxim, like all others of any value, is to be taken as the symbol of an idea. Taken according to the letter, it is inapplicable in any case: ideally interpreted it *suggests* a rule of practice of universal application. But to proceed.

The process which I have described, was, of course, not carried on by single Churches exclusively, for their private guidance, still less by individuals as a method of ascertaining the truth. It was taken up in common, and the results committed to formal documents, for the use of those who should come after. The widest collations of this kind, carry with them the highest authority, as the judgment of œcumenical councils, representing the whole Church; but we are not to suppose that equally correct results were not to be obtained within a much smaller sphere of observation; or on the other hand that the most perfectly and extensively convened assembly presents more than an approximate exponent of catholicity. We shall equally err in slighting their decisions, and in deeming them infallible¹. We are not to suppose that the measure

¹ Article xxi.

though ideally perfect, has ever been perfectly applied; nor yet to doubt its practical use and necessity because it still leaves some room for individual judgment and responsibility.

This, then, is the first rectifying principle by which the purity of Gospel truth is to be preserved: but this of itself would have been utterly insufficient. Taken singly, it labours under this capital defect. It supposes the examiners already in possession of the truth. No synod of divines ever met with impartial mind prepared to determine the matter in question by a fair induction from evidence. Each produced his own pre-conception—his own particular type, and the cause was decided by a majority of votes, sometimes a very small one. If any were induced to alter their opinions it was by fair argument; but in general every one came to teach, few, if any, to learn. The greatest and best on both sides of the question came deeply convinced that they were already in possession of catholic truth, whatever submission they may have yielded to the voice of the majority. We may believe the divine blessing to rest in general upon this method of investigation; but as it does not constitute, so neither does it discover the truth. At the best, it merely ascertains, fixes, preserves it. It proceeds upon the supposition, that the majority are, in fact, possessors of that common type, which is the only true measure of the truth. But if this were once lost, it could never be recovered, except by a fresh revelation, any more than the doctrines of a supreme being, or a future state—the fall of man, or the future advent of a Redeemer, could have been ascertained, independently of the Bible; by a council gathered from all the states and tribes of heathen antiquity. Indeed, had not the idea already assumed a distinct form in the minds

of individual inquirers, the question could never have been stirred, nor the evidence collected.

But blessed be God, the Gospel type can never be lost. Long before the era of general councils, the principal writings of the New Testament had obtained universal currency, and very soon afterwards, the sacred canon, or collected volume of Scripture, was definitively settled. How this was effected is not now the question. We know that it was, in fact, accepted by the Church as a genuine and authentic record of the original revelation. Thenceforth then the evangelical type was contained, not as heretofore in the tradition of separate Churches so liable to adulteration, nor in the collective tradition of all Churches, from which, if once lost, it could never have been recovered; still less in the minds of individual men, to be effaced, or disfigured by every kind of extraneous influence, but in a permanent form, of all others the most secure from mutability, and the most easy of consultation.

Thus we have in the Scriptures an exponent of the truth far more surely fixed, and in many respects far more adequately expressive than any of the other forms in which it is traditionally preserved. I say *more* surely fixed; but here several important considerations present themselves. The variable character which attaches even to the *written* monuments of antiquity, (for the best preserved, and best considered texts are still in parts unsettled,) is in the sacred writings of our most holy faith so slight, that it may, for the most part, be practically neglected. In nothing do we see the working of a catholic economy animated, however imperfectly, by a catholic spirit more strikingly than in this: for from the peculiar manner in which the sacred volume was originally disseminated and

multiplied, an amount of uncertainty might have been expected to arise, which would have materially lessened its value. We owe it to a special providence, exhibited in the results of a scheme far wiser than the wit of man could have devised, that to all intents and purposes it is as nothing. Yet the doubt which has always hung over a few not wholly unimportant passages of the New Testament, proves that it exists as an appreciable quantity, which the critical inquiries of learned men, conducted in a really philosophical as well as ecclesiastical spirit, may indeed diminish, but which never, we may presume, can be entirely removed. Strictly speaking, the Greek Testament of Constantinople, or Alexandria, was not, *literatim* and *verbatim*, the Greek Testament of Rome. Which of these was *the infallible test*? The Church of Rome cut the gordian knot, by giving this character to a translation of their own. But *we* have not so learned Christ. It will readily be admitted that the sacred original is that *common type* from which each of the above recensions was taken, which is contained more or less perfectly in every one of its *copies*, without being identical with any, but to be collated from all, much in the same way as the catholic type of the Church itself is determined. And, in fact, the very same measures of universality have been applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to the manuscripts of the Greek Testaments with signal, but we can never hope to say *complete* success. The Greek Testament of Stephens, is not *punctuatim* that of Mill, of Griesbach, or of Bloomfield. Each varies *a little* from its predecessor, now backwards, now forwards; now this way, now that. Still the original *letter*—a transcript of the autograph, exact in every word and syllable—exists for us as an idea, of which we have many exponents, by any one of which it is *adequately*

represented, though it be absolutely coincident with none.

We see, then, that the same variableness, abstractedly considered,—is predicable both of the sacred book, which we read, and the holy Church which we see,—the same *sort* of variableness, but so different in *degree*, that the former may, in general practice, be taken as a fixed measure of the latter. Yet there can be no doubt that the high comparative fixedness of the scriptural text is owing to a similar tendency in the Church itself; nay, to the direct instrumentality of the Church, not merely as furnishing a continual supply of duly qualified investigators, but as controlling them, yet without compulsion, by an influence ever tending to unity and general conservation: of the Church, therefore, *as a spiritual polity*, vindicating its own identity in that of its component parts, and necessary adjuncts. Here then is a mutual action, the necessity and extent of which become still more apparent, when we take the interpretation of Scripture into account, and remember that this also is guided by the same catholic principles.

But again, to treat this subject practically, we must, in some measure, identify the written word with the English Bible,—the only Scriptures accessible to the great mass of our countrymen,—the only Scriptures consulted by the vast majority of those who trust, (as they imagine,) to this book alone for their salvation, not merely in contradistinction, but in opposition to the visible Church. To these persons the smallest variableness, not simply in the original text, but in their version of it, is a matter of infinite moment, because *they* cannot be *assured* either of its nature, or extent. Now a translation put forth under the authority even of a Church

commission at the present day, would not be exactly tantamount to the immortal work bequeathed to us by Bishop Andrews and his associates. However trifling the difference, and it would be very trifling, it destroys the *absolute* fixedness of the one only exponent of Gospel truth existing out of the Church, and demonstrates the necessity of some authority independent of Scripture, if only to point out how small the defect really is.

The question then returns upon us, does this slight, this all but evanescent variableness, diminish the value either of the original text, or of its current representative? I presume to think *the very reverse*. It shows the nature of the divine gift which we have received, pointing out both what it is, and what it is not, and in this way suggesting its proper use, while it reminds us in many ways of the office of that Church by whom this sacred repertory of revealed knowledge was first authenticated, and has ever since been preserved. If there be any one verse in the gospels or epistles, involving matter either of fact or doctrine, or even a devotional phrase¹, and capable of

¹ As an instance of the first, take the subscriptions to the apostolic epistles; of the second, 1 John iv. 8 (the three heavenly witnesses); and of the third, Matt. vi. 13 (the doxology appended to the Lord's prayer). The narrative of the woman taken in adultery, (John viii. 1—11, with the last clause in chap. vii.) is another case in point. Of the *genuineness* of this truly divine passage, there can indeed be no *reasonable* doubt. That such an illustration of the Saviour's wisdom and goodness, marked by so profound and peculiar an insight into the nature of the Christian scheme, should have been originated by any

uninspired man—and the same man capable of an impious forgery, is utterly incredible. On the other hand, whether we regard the *nexus sententiarum*, the wording of the original Greek, the authority of manuscripts, and above all, the silence of the early Fathers, including Chrysostom, its *authenticity* will ever remain *questionable*. To suppose that the ancient homilists, in travelling through the Gospel by St. John, with one consent passed over this passage, if it were found in *their* copies, is to impute to them the most egregious and unaccountable folly. If they thought it likely to be misinterpreted, so

being cited in this behalf, as of scriptural authority; if, I say, there be one such verse of *doubtful* authenticity, we may be led by this alone to suspect that the revelation of Jesus Christ has not been so committed to any one channel of communication, as to supersede every other. And again, when we remember that a vernacular text must ever be to the mass of Christians, the parent of scriptural exposition; if the former be ever so little disputable, we may expect to find some mode by which the latter may be corrected; something to fix the variable element, and render the whole available to its all-important purpose. On the other hand, the very trifling amount of this uncertainty may teach us how to think rightly of that complex apparatus of outward means, by which the holy book having been brought and kept so near to its original perfection, has been laid before the people with so little loss or change of meaning, "in their own tongue wherein they were born."

This digression has a little superseded the progress of my argument, which I now resume. We have, I repeat, in the Scriptures, notwithstanding a *liability* to defect, (ever mercifully overruled,) enough to teach us not to confound the means with the end, or to exalt the letter, while we neglect the spirit of revelation; we have, I say,

much the more reason why it should be carefully explained. It is supposed by Vater to have been transferred at an early period from the margin of a manuscript into the text. If so, why not a *genuine* tradition, preserved in some particular Church? a supposition strengthened by the fact, that in three MSS. it is found as a part of St. Luke's Gospel^a. This will

^a xxi. 37, 38.

account for its partial recognition in the first instance; while its gradual adoption by the Church at large may have been due, partly to the authority with which it came recommended, and partly to the irresistible evidence of the passage itself. In the other case, it must have been *omitted* in the most ancient manuscripts, and Chrysostom, it would seem, have preached from a mutilated copy.

in the Scriptures, an exponent of the truth, far *more* surely fixed than any other of the forms under which it is outwardly communicated to mankind.

Now to trace the uses of this exponent according to the order of thought, the first employment of Holy Writ must have been, not to communicate fresh information, but to test the accuracy—the catholicity of that already possessed. If the several writings embodied in the sacred volume, were received by the whole Church as authentic expositions of the faith, then the traditions of each particular Church were catholic, in so far as they corresponded to this infallible measure. For indeed this correspondence must have been one element in the proof by which the *genuineness* of the canonical Scriptures was itself established. Mere *authenticity*, supposing it to be the first and principal point considered, would not in itself have been sufficient. Why, for instance, should the Gospel by St. Luke, neither an apostle nor eye-witness of the facts which he narrates, have obtained the preference over the many contemporary or more ancient narratives¹, which we know to have been extant when the sacred canon was forming? Surely because it was judged to be entirely catholic, tallying exactly with the living tradition of the Church universal. But if the Gospel record were genuine, because, among other reasons, it answered to the catholic type, as still distinctly visible in the recent and unadulterated tradition of the Church, then, ever afterwards, the genuine traditions of the Church must correspond to the same type as impressed upon the written record. Thus tradition became not merely coincident, but identical with Scripture, and Scripture with tradition, each as far as it went; and the one may properly be taken

¹ Luke i. 1, 2.

as a representative of the other on every point within its compass. Yet, taken as a whole, each presents its own peculiar delineation of the common truth. Bring the two together, and the picture is not only more full, but more perfect. The shadowy outline of the one is filled out and tinted in the other.

Meanwhile we must bear in mind, that Scripture is not the truth itself, but only the sacred casket in which it is preserved. It must be opened. This brings us to the question of scriptural interpretation. Now from what has been already said it will have been seen, that to interpret Scripture solely from its own evidence, is wilfully to refuse a guide provided by the very nature of the case. But, indeed, this is seldom, if ever attempted. Every man brings with him a certain pre-conception derived directly or indirectly from traditional sources, and the result of his researches, even without his knowledge, and against his intention, is a joint product of two co-efficients,—Scripture being one, and tradition the other. While the warmest advocates of the latter can do no more than assign this pre-conception to its real origin, and authenticate it to a certain extent, on its own grounds; the object being still the same, to ascertain the real sense of Scripture by the comparison. And this has been the course taken by the Church as a body, the results of the process being further verified, in the same manner as I have shown the tradition itself to have been settled. For, in the first place, every particular Church puts her own traditional interpretation upon the Scriptures. This is compared with that of other Churches, through the medium of councils, or sometimes by the labours of particular doctors, extensively accredited by the Christian body. But it will readily be seen, that

nothing has ever rested upon their authority as individuals. They have submitted their arguments to the reason, their evidence to the knowledge of the whole Church, with the utmost unreserve, and with the certain expectation of the most rigid scrutiny.

Thus we see, that Church tradition and Scripture have long been apparently merged in each other, to a very considerable extent. Nevertheless they are still distinguishable, not merely in idea, but as objective realities, having an independent existence, and serving distinct purposes. Not merely may Scripture be contemplated *as* tradition, and tradition *as* Scripture, with the most important consequences in each case; but each, if I may so speak, goes beyond the other in its own direction. In the first instance, Scripture truth cannot but present itself to the mind under ordinary circumstances, in the form of tradition. I speak not merely of creeds, catechisms, sacraments, and liturgical formularies, with all the complex influences of holy persons, places, and things, in so far as these have, in substance and in spirit, descended to us traditionally from apostolic times; but of the mass of religious opinion which comes to *us* by descent; which is, therefore, in its nature traditional, and carries with it the presumption of an apostolic origin. That it has, in fact, been constantly *renewed* from Scripture, does not affect this statement. To feed and keep alive the tradition of the Church is a principal use of Scripture, but all that is communicated in this way still exists *as* tradition. This then in the first instance; but in the next place, it is every man's duty, to the extent of his opportunities, to verify his creed by a comparison with the written word. He will thus *retain* as Scripture that which he has *received* as tradition. This investigation

will do more than confirm and correct his former impression; it will give him clearer, fuller, more extended views of divine truths. He will see the principles of heavenly knowledge expanded in other directions, besides those suggested by the fixed ordinances of the Church: and although he can scarcely draw any legitimate deduction from the sacred text, which has not already formed part of the religious patrimony of the saints, scriptural discovery, though not absolutely at an end, proceeding with slow and wary steps, yet old truths will become new for him. He will "know the certainty of those things, in which he has been instructed¹." And now returning, as it were, with a new faculty of discernment, to his first monitress, he will see far more in the permanent tradition of the Church, than it seemed at first to exhibit, even as more and greater lights are seen in the firmament through a telescope, than by the naked eye; or, rather, as the eye itself acquires a new power of vision, when assisted by a mental image of the object to be observed.

But will he find *all* of this tradition in Scripture? Must he reject everything as of recent invention which he does not meet with in the sacred page? Has the Church, to speak plainly, preserved nothing of the original deposit, nothing which it is her duty to set forth, and ours to receive, in any other mode? I know of nothing either in Holy Writ, or in ecclesiastical history, or in the case as it now stands, to warrant such a supposition. The Scriptures are either narrative or preceptive, and, in the latter case, either dogmatic or explanatory. Every fact, therefore, which is necessary to be believed, every tenet which is necessary to be holden, may be expected to be contained in this precious monument.

¹ Luke i. 2.

This appears inferentially from its own showing, and has ever been the doctrine of the Church¹; so that we may well apply to the Scriptures of the New Testament, what is said of the Old, that they are “able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus².” Furthermore, the doctrine of Scripture receives in Scripture itself the most ample illustration. Not merely the heavenly discourses, by which our adorable Saviour Himself taught and prepared His apostles, but the written instructions by which these same apostles, so trained and specially inspired for this very end, educated and confirmed the infant Churches of Christianity, have come down to us; and although we cannot fix a limit to the quantity of assistance of this kind, which is needful or desirable, yet we may be assured, that the good providence of God has *sufficiently* provided in this way for the satisfaction of believers in every age. We must, however, remember that a Church outwardly cognizable, and consequently existing under a given form, is everywhere *supposed* in the sacred writings, without being anywhere *fully* described. It was not the Saviour’s design to give beforehand the plan of a visible polity, such as had been delivered by Moses to the Jews. He left behind Him principles, revelations, living truths. These by His Spirit He planted in the minds of His people; and, accordingly, they could not but object, the moment they began to operate in the world. We know that they did so. Yet the Lord Himself has put forth its constitutive principles in a substantive form. The Acts of the Apostles, though it contains many incidental notices of the

¹ Αὐτάρ κεις μὲν γὰρ εἰσιν αἱ ἁγίαι καὶ θεόπνευσται γραφαὶ πρὸς τὴν τῆς ἀληθείας ἐπαγ- | γελίαν. ΑΘΗΝ. *Oral. cont. Gentes.*
Tom. i. page 1.
² 2 Tim. iii. 15.

Church, as an organized body, is in the main biographical. It treats of men, not of institutions: while the apostolical epistles are addressed to Churches already formed, and speak of their organization and original catechism by way of allusion merely. Besides, we are not to suppose, that these were as definite in the first instance, as they eventually became, and as they were intended to become. Growth, not mere construction, is the law of a spiritual body.

From this I infer, first, that the visible frame-work of the Church may have exhibited many not unimportant details, even in the apostolic age, of which we have no *distinct* notice in Scripture. It is not necessary to inquire, how far these are essential to the perfection of the entire scheme. If we see amongst us an ancient, historical, perpetually visible, and successional Church; if the general outline and leading features of this Church be plainly visible in holy Scripture, and if, on the whole, it exhibit the actual working of scriptural principles, we shall not lightly discard from the machinery any portion apparently integral, and for anything that appears to the contrary, of equal antiquity with the rest. It will, of course, be an *additional* satisfaction, if we can trace the past existence of the whole system, through a series of ecclesiastical writers, to the earliest Christian period; and on this principle the Church of England has acted, with little deviation, from the Reformation to the present day.

But, again, it is clear that a volume like the New Testament, written in a language no longer spoken, and abounding in local and temporary allusions, must have been, in some respects, better understood at the time when it was first published, than at any subsequent period. If then we are enabled to collect from the most

ancient Christian writers, any portion of this primitive understanding, it is surely a source of information which it would be little less than insanity to neglect. Hence, the *attention* (not to be regarded as an unlimited deference), always paid by the Church of England to “the old catholic fathers,” as interpreters of holy writ, to whom, as recording the knowledge and current belief of those ages, we may add the six first general councils. But is it necessary for these ends that the former, every one of them, should be men of sound judgment, or even of unimpeachable veracity? or that the latter, no matter what contrary appearances may present themselves, should be held infallible, in virtue of a mysterious sanction from the Head of the Church? If episcopal government, and a regularly ordained clergy, connected in form with the Levitical priesthood, but in spirit and functions with the Lord Himself, appears, from the writings of Clemens Romanus¹ and Irenæus, to have been the actual constitution of the Church at those early periods; if it be deducible from the same (and other contemporary) authorities, (in particular from the Epistles of Ignatius, if these be genuine, or even of extreme antiquity,) indirectly and negatively, as well as directly and positively, that this order was not of recent or memorable origin (except as an apostolic tradition), how is the argument affected by a mistake of the first, respecting a fabulous bird²? or of the second, respecting the nature of millennial blessings³?

¹ *Ad. Cor. Epist. i., 40—44*, brated passage here alluded to. (p. 111, Ed. Cot.)

² *Ad. Cor. Epist. i., 25, 26*, In a calm, judicious, and deeply pious exposition of revealed truth, (p. 103, 104, Ed. Cot.) every way according with Scripture,

³ Nothing surely can be more idle than the exception, taken to illustration, given, apparently, as this very ancient monument of a fact, while it would have served Christian antiquity, from the cele- the purpose as well as, or better

And, again, if from these and other very ancient sources, we detect the formal administration of the two great

than a fable. Next to the transformation of the butterfly—the typical psyche,—next, I say, to this, the renascence of the phoenix conveys the liveliest and most beautiful image of the resurrection of the human soul, which has ever been discovered, or devised. As proofs, neither are required; and the one, perhaps, brings with it as much confirmation as the other, though in a different way. The first exhibits a sort of analogy in the world of nature; the second demonstrates the existence of the idea in the mind of man, shaping to its own end, or, to speak more strictly, *informing* a gracious fancy, just as a phantastic dream originates with some obscure suggestion, either of the thinking or sentient principle, latent as a thought or sensation, but revealed as a fleeting, unsubstantial vision.

Luther, in speaking of the harmony between the law and the Gospel, states, that there is “such a natural unitie and affinitie between the vine and the olive-tree, that when the vine-branch is graffed, and set upon the olive-tree, then it beareth grapes and olives.”—*Table Sayings*, chap. 20. Is the truth of the great Reformer’s doctrine, the value of his opinion, or even the persuasiveness of his teaching, any way dependent upon the correctness or incorrectness of this piece of arboriculture? Is it necessary that an expositor, much more a mere witness of Christian truth, should be an infallible, or even a well-informed naturalist?

The Epistle of Barnabas is a most valuable remain; first, as proving the outward existence of the Church at that precise period, and, secondly, as showing in what light the earliest Christians regarded the Old Testament Scriptures. It exhibits the leaning of men’s minds, under the influence of a recent revelation, towards moral and spiritual truth;—an inclination which had already made itself felt, as an unquiet yearning, before the actual enlightenment took place. Is the inference less evident, or less useful, because this particular father displays an entire want of critical sagacity, and shares in certain popular errors, respecting the hare, the hyæna, and the weasel?

There is much of the same spirit in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. Take an example from the dialogue between Matthew and Prudence:—“M. Why do the springs come to us through the earth? P. To show that the grace of God comes to us through the body of Christ. M. Why do some of the springs rise out of the top of high hills? P. To show that the Spirit of grace springs up in some that are great and mighty, as well as in many that are poor and low, &c.” Bunyan read the book of nature much in the same way, as Barnabas read the Hebrew Scriptures. Again:—“M. Why does the pelican pierce her own breast with her bill? P. To nourish her young ones with her blood, and thereby to show, that Christ, the blessed, so loveth His young, His people, as to save them

sacraments', the existence of a fixed liturgy, corresponding in substance to our own', the baptism of young children, the solemnization of weekly and annual festivals, the use of stated places, and fixed times of worship", with many other not unimportant features of the Church, as we now see it,—indications of an outward, independent, and continuous visibility, corroborating the irresistible presumption derived from its actual existence at the present day, and from its general correspondency with Scripture: if, on the other hand, we do *not* find the sacramental cup denied to the laity, or the consecrated elements identified with the flesh and blood of His phenomenal body,—flesh as flesh, and blood as blood,—yet each deprived of its accidents; if we find *no* worshipping of saint, image, or host; if we find *no* private masses said, no eucharist celebrated, except as communion; if we find *no* belief in a purgatorial state, under priestly cognizance and control; if, lastly, we have no supremacy, or even priority, assigned to the Roman bishop, independent of secular and mutable arrangements,—arguments conclu-

from death by His blood." John Bunyan's divinity has been a light and a comfort to hundreds of thousands, and his pelican shall "fly, unmarked of any man," with the Phœnix of St. Clement.

¹ JUSTIN MARTYR, *Apol. prim.* pp. 95, 96, 98. Edit. Thirlby. But the following words of St. Clement may be taken as decisive: ἁμαρτία γὰρ οὐ μικρὰ ἡμῖν ἐσται, εἰὰν τοὺς ἀμέμπτως καὶ ὁσίως προσενέγκοντας τὰ δῶρα, τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς ἀποβάλωμεν. Cap. 44, p. 112, D. Cotel. So the apostolic ministry is termed in the same chapter, λειτουργία. That these are sacramental phrases, needs no proof. Of the spiritual acceptance

which was put upon them by the early Church, take the following illustration. "Tertullianus iv. contra Marcionem 9, agens de loco Matt. viii. 4. Vade, ostende te Sacerdoti, et offer munus quod præcepit Moyses; ait; Argumenta enim figurata, utpote prophetatæ Legis, adhuc in suis imaginibus tuebatur, quæ significabant hominem quondam peccatorem, verbo mox Dei immaculatum, offerre debere munus Deo apud Templum, orationem scilicet et actionem gratiarum apud Ecclesiam, per Christum Jesum Catholicum Patris Sacerdotem." From Cotelarius.

² PALMER *on the Liturgy.*

³ *Clem. Rom. Epist. ii. cap. 40.*

sive against those who hold these inventions to form a part, either of scriptural or primitive tradition,—is it necessary to mix up the individual character of the witnesses with their testimony on these important points? Is anything else required, except to fix the dates of their several writings? But, indeed, the singular merit of many of the ancient fathers as theologians, involved as it is with the singular advantage of their position, has tended to perplex the question. The first renders their *opinion* valuable, the last makes their *evidence* invaluable.

To recapitulate: Scripture and tradition mutually fix and explain each other, for which purpose both are essentially requisite. Without Scripture, tradition would long ago have been utterly disfigured: or if, by miracle, the visible structure of the Church in which, independently of Scripture, it is principally conveyed, remained unaltered, its meaning, as in the dark ages of the Church, when the Bible was a sealed book, would have been lost or perverted. Without tradition, on the other hand, Scripture would come with no presumptive authority, and leave behind it no definite impression; nothing to prove the history to be fact, or even to show what a large portion of it signifies. If its doctrine could be collated at all, (and the uncertainty which prevails even now out of the Church, renders this very questionable; for those who have wandered furthest from the guide of their youth, have still had the benefit of her instruction;) if the true doctrine of Scripture could be collated at all, it would exist as a speculation, merely warmed at best into a half-life by that inherited piety, falsely called natural, which was in the heathen the monument of an unwritten, and all-but-forgotten revelation. Though the Word of God should have been recognised as the bread of life,

yet how it might be fed upon by every man could never have been *assuredly* known. But for the fulfilment of this all-important object, the tradition of the Church does not remain to be collated from ancient authors. It exists in an embodied form. It is seen, and felt, and acknowledged, more or less fully, by every inhabitant of every Christian land, holding within itself the entire substance of Scripture, which from the beginning it has accepted, and continually asserts as its own.

Thus tested, thus explained, it cannot but continue in the main, pure and catholic. And that comparison with other Churches which, as we have seen, was originally resorted to as a measure of catholicity, is no longer necessary. Its place is supplied by Scripture, not as an authentic record of catholic Christianity, superseding the use of tradition; not as if genuine tradition were nothing else but Scripture, nor as if either were lost in the other, but because they tally with each other throughout, and constitute in union a self-consistent whole.

In this light, I have ventured to consider tradition as distinguished from Scripture, each being taken as the exponent of a peculiar idea, each setting forth the truth in its own way. And though the researches of ecclesiastical learning be of infinite value, as corroborating these views, yet for all practical purposes tradition, conjoined with Scripture, carries with it its own evidence; so that any man of ordinary intelligence, seeking divine knowledge with a thoughtful mind, and under the influence of prayer, who reads the Bible in the house of God, as he turns his eyes from one to the other, will see in each whatever he finds wanting in the other, either to fix its authority or determine its meaning¹.

¹ In another point of view, the written volume of revelation, may be regarded as an outward mean, and will thus be identified

Closely connected with this subject, is that of episcopal succession. It is a fixed outward mean, (in common with many others,) by which the identity of the visible Church, as co-ordinate with the written Word, is preserved; just as the identity of an individual man, though a spiritual law, is symbolized by the continuous reproduction of the same bodily organs. It is more than this; it is not merely one leading symbol of permanent visibility, but a co-efficient in every other. Yet it must be examined *according to this idea*, and be judged to realize its existence, in so far as it fulfils it; no further, and just so far. I dare not affect to think of it, in order to render it intelligible and persuasive to faithless and mechanical minds, as of a mere *physical* continuity, by which the spiritual powers of the pastorate are conveyed, like a stream of electricity along a metal wire. I will not peril a truth, the importance of which I hold it impossible to exaggerate, by involving it in a research, carried on by flickering and feeble torch-light, through a period left by Providence in noticeable, perhaps significant, obscurity; I will not entangle the subject in a net-work of needless scruples, nor hold it needful to remove every seeming anomaly which it may exhibit in its actual working. If it be said, that this concession takes from the strictness of its application, opening a door to licence and evasion, I deny the inference. It may, indeed, leave something for the caviller to object, (far less, however, than he finds in another quarter,) but nothing for the honest to believe, against the doctrine. We know that the primitive

rather with the Church, than with the Word, of God. The Word will then be considered as subjective in the believing mind; the Church, including the Scriptures, as objectively correlative: the

union of the two, or the recognition of the outward truth by the believer, as coincident with his own faith, taking place in men through the operation of the Holy Ghost.

apostolical Churches produced at an early period, lists of their bishops in the order of their succession, from the first foundation of their respective sees; and we have no reason to doubt the general correctness of these records. But if a link should have been supplied in any instance upon doubtful authority, will this of itself excite the smallest suspicion, that the Church in question was not outwardly and episcopally derived from the great apostolic body? Does not episcopacy itself, combined with the other outward characters of catholicity, and in default of all evidence to the contrary, establish the fact? Shall the Churches in which this line has been perpetuated, jeopard their title by identifying it with the result of an antiquarian discussion? I contend that visibility,—real, outward, and continuous visibility,—is legibly inscribed upon their very portals, neither needing long investigation, nor admitting of reasonable question. But to come nearer home, our own beloved Church, in what archives is her charter deposited? I have all along repudiated the notion, that her peculiar character, as distinguished from the denominational sects, is due to her legal establishment, or that her spiritual authority has no *other* ground than her conformity, however demonstrable, to the scriptural pattern. It has been my object to show, that no portion of the Church of Christ can be *originated*, as an independent body, at the will of man; that its visibility must, if I may so speak, be its own,—an ever-living, independent witness for the truth, tendering an evidence in perfect harmony with the Word, but not a mere duplication of the same notes. Agreement is not sameness; on the contrary, it implies a difference, while it excludes variation. Now this visibility must, by its definition, have been propagated in an uninterrupted line from the

beginning. In other words, it is continuous, amounting to nothing less than the perpetual re-production and unbroken identity of the entire body, symbolized particularly in holy communion. This is effected by a combination of causes, including a regularly-ordained pastorate, which involves the doctrine of episcopal succession; but we are not to confound the thing itself with the registers in which it is tabulated and recorded. That these are of extreme curiosity, and no inconsiderable importance, is undeniable; but they are obviously not *essential*; and if any part of the series be of doubtful authenticity, or wholly wanting, let it not be thought that the continuity of the Church itself is affected by the circumstance, or that sufficient evidence, of a far more satisfactory nature, is not supplied in the traditional character of its ordinances, written wherever it really exists, with other authenticating marks, both of a positive and negative kind, as I have before expressed myself, upon its very portals, in such legible characters that all who run may read.

To return then to the case in point. Could any one doubt that the Church visible in England, *before* the Reformation, was derived by true outward succession from the apostles themselves? Would it have been necessary to inquire, whether the pastoral staff, having been conveyed by unseen hands across the dim horizon of legend and surmise, which bounds the history of the British Church, had descended through an unrecorded catalogue of native bishops, or were received through St. Augustine and St. Gregory from the apostolic founders of the Roman see? Or, shall the episcopal character of the latter depend upon the accuracy, by which this sacred genealogy is traced? We trifle with the cause, and betray it into the hands of cavillers, when we but *seem* to

rest it upon such evidence. Our forefathers saw the *visible* charter of their privileges, as churchmen, spread before their eyes, and the fact that it was undisputed proves it to be indisputable.

We are somewhat differently circumstanced. Our charter is disputed, and it, therefore, becomes us to examine it with more attention, not to silence our adversaries, but if possible to convince them, and, at all events, to satisfy ourselves. Let it be freely conceded that an enormous evil was removed by a violent remedy. *Immedicabile vulnus ense recidendum est*; but the process of excision is both painful and dangerous, and generally leaves a scar. Yet if such has been the case with us, it betrays a defect of spirituality. Be this completely re-asserted, and we may say, in the exquisite language of the poet,—

“The griding sword, with discontinuous wound,
Passed through us,—but the ethereal substance closed,
Not long divisible.”

Let it be granted further, that in the course of this perilous struggle some irregularities occurred, which are made neither better nor worse, by the fact that they are not without a parallel in other churches and at other times. If they have left a flaw in our title, we are but poorly consoled by seeing others similarly disqualified. But let us recur to first principles. We have seen that the continuity which is essential to the visible Church, depends upon the regular succession of its bishops. It does not *consist* in this succession, but it depends upon it in the order of providence, more or less immediately as an appointed mean; and whether we refer to Scripture, to reason, or experience, we may confidently add an indis-

pensable mean. Suppose this succession repeatedly set aside by the temporal power: suppose it suspended for any considerable time, or disturbed to any considerable extent: we plainly perceive that, under such circumstances, the identity of the Church must eventually be destroyed, and all the purposes served by its continuous visibility utterly frustrated. It is no longer an independent witness. In such an event the only course open would be to fall back on its earlier self, to unite itself with the great visible body in other lands, and take up again, as far as may be, its old links with the past, through the medium of those fixed symbols by which alone that connexion can be effectually recovered, or permanently preserved.

But was the case so with this country at the reformation? Was there any considerable approach to such a catastrophe? On the contrary, was not the identity of the Church, by the mercy of God, so truly, so plainly, so ostensibly preserved, as to preclude any reasonable *suspicion* of a break—the separation of the Romanists themselves being merely an after-thought? Do we not see the same sacred orders, the same body of clergy, and essentially the same liturgy? Did not the same baptism continue to recruit the great congregation—the same communion, purified of its excrescences, to unite them with their forefathers, and with their successors, with each other, and with their unseen Head, that they might feel and know themselves to be “one bread and one body?” Was the *sense* of continuity ever for a moment interrupted? I will not affirm that no holy associations were rudely sundered, or measure the extent of the evil against the stern necessity which produced it. It is sufficient to show that there was no approximation, not even in appearance, to an universal and vital disseverment. If

there were a pretext for cavil, there was no room—no, not the slightest—for real apprehension.

What then is the inference? that the succession of the Church was *evidently* unbroken; so evidently, that the wayfaring man might see and know, and be assured of it. In particular, that the bishops by whom it was now ordered, were, by the permission of God, true bishops, fully authorized to perform their important functions, and to perpetuate, by the divine blessing, that sacred polity, to which their continual presence and agency was thus providentially secured: an inference which every succeeding generation re-asserts and strengthens. We shall then be prepared, with calm and serious minds, to investigate the real nature and actual extent of these deviations, a theological inquiry of the highest interest and importance, but not, I venture to affirm, *vitally* affecting our privileges as catholic churchmen:—catholics in the full sense of the word—though reformed from gross corruptions, liberated from foul tyranny, and evermore *protesting* against both.

We shall exhibit them fearlessly, yet cautiously, in their just dimensions, entertaining views the very reverse of those with which this inquiry is commonly pursued. It is important to see how wide the deviation was; not that we may provide a precedent for greater, more reckless, and far less justifiable inroads upon Church principles, but that we may learn to rely on the “native virtue” which the Church, (in common with all other constitutions in which a vital principle is embodied, and more than all other constitutions, because the ecclesiastical principle possesses of all others the purest and keenest vitality,) is enabled to exert in healing up her gaping wounds, and re-producing her mutilated parts. Not every continuous

obstruction by which the outward working of an idea is impeded, is able to destroy, though it may repress, its energy; it may somewhat disguise its presence, without wholly concealing it. Neither is every blow which is inflicted even on a vital organ necessarily mortal: we must judge by the event, fearing even the slightest injury, but not despairing after the greatest. This on the one hand.

On the other hand, it is important to see how *small* the deviation was, not in a spirit of fearfulness, as if our situation were really attended with suspicious circumstances, and our case required the utmost stretch of extenuation. No, but that we may learn what mighty consequences have resulted even by so slight a departure, not merely from ancient precedent, though this is something, but from the usual and natural method in which the necessary functions of the Church are discharged. We shall tremble to repeat an experiment, though upon the whole successful, when we see how much permanent evil it has occasioned: and should it ever become necessary to submit to an extensive change of any kind in our ecclesiastical regimen, we shall look back at the reformation for much positive, but also for some negative instruction, while amidst so much to imitate, we discern so much also to avoid. Above all, we shall free the doctrine of episcopal succession from the false and counterfeit mysteriousness in which it is too often involved, and by which its full and hearty reception is too often prevented; while we trace, in the open dispensation of providence, the effects produced by any departure, however slight or necessary, from its regular forms. Or if we transfer the argument from this particular symbol, to the ecclesiastical system at large, as re-modelled in the fifteenth century, we obtain the same result. Is this a difference in words? Nay, in

things, and the widest that can be conceived. It breeds no question as to the reality of the Church which we have, while it satisfactorily accounts for the Church which we have not. It substitutes for an obscure charm, a divinely revealed, but open-working, and most evident principle; while it directs our faith to the One unseen, whose mystery, be it ever devoutly remembered, though darkness to the sensual, and folly to the worldly mind, is *wisdom spoken among the perfect*—not concealment, but revelation—not obscurity, but light.

Lastly, when we reflect how necessary the mighty change effected at the reformation had become, how little it could have been brought about by human efforts, independently of concurrent circumstances, how much wisdom and piety were engaged in the work, and how much they were assisted by providence, yet how imperfectly they were enabled to control the cupidity, self-will, and violence, with which they were associated, we shall on the one hand offer fervid thanksgivings to Almighty God, both for the good we have received, and the evil we have escaped, and on the other hand be reminded to watch with sleepless vigilance against the stealthy return of those principles and practices, which it is the continued purpose of protestantism to resist, as it was the original object of the reformation to exclude; ever remembering that one error is never successfully combated by another: that there is no such thing as excess, unaccompanied by falsehood, and that opposite falsehoods re-produce, instead of neutralizing each other. But the “truth will set us free.”

Let us pray for an abundant outpouring of that Spirit of truth, whose presence and operation in the world we are taught to recognise as the gift of our ascended Lord and the first-fruits of His sojourn in the flesh. So shall

we find the word of God,—both life and light—in our hearts; and the Church of God,—life-giving and light-diffusing—in our land. Not as if the earthly Jerusalem, the city of the saints below, had ever fully realized its own divine image. Not as if the visible Church, in any one time or place, had ever presented more than a proximate image of that catholic type which is of all times and of all places. We live in a world of feeble strivings and faint indications; and may be well content if, in the general and manifest tendencies of those outward appointments, (of whatever kind,) under which we are providentially placed, we can discern their true intention,—their shaping principle, and *inward* form. But with respect to that traditional order, according to which the word is set forth, and the sacraments administered, in this country, we have in Holy Writ, a fixed and infallible criterion by which, (in addition to its own apparent evidence, and the witness of the Spirit,) we may readily ascertain how far it is actually conformable to the heavenly constitution, which it professes to represent. The nature of this comparison, with some of the principal results, I have endeavoured to illustrate in this volume, happy if I shall have assisted a single reader to see more clearly, and to acknowledge more gratefully, “the scriptural character of the English Church.”

THE END.

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